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AMBASSADOR ARTHUR W. HUMMEL, JR.

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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Q: Today is April 13, 1994. This is an interview with Ambassador Arthur William Hummel, Jr., done at his home in Chevy Chase, MD, on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies. I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. Mr. Ambassador, I wonder if we could start out with your background, because it's a very unusual one. I'd like to talk a bit about this as we go.

HUMMEL: All right. I was born in China in Fenchow (now Fengyang), in Shanxi Province. My parents were missionaries. We moved to Peking when I was three years old, so my only childhood memories are of Peking.

Q: You were born in 1920?

HUMMEL: That's right. I spent most of my time in Beijing, then known as Peking. We moved back to the United States in 1928. My father ended his service as a missionary, because he was basically a scholar of Chinese. He was recruited by the then Librarian, Dr. Putnam, to be head of the Oriental Division of the Library of Congress. We moved to Chevy Chase in 1928, not far from where we are now. I had forgotten all of my childhood Chinese because I refused to speak it, which, I understand, is not too unusual among kids born abroad who want to be like other Americans.

Q: I had a son who would never speak Serbian again. He never used it. Well, let me talk about your early years. You were eight years old when you left China. Can you talk a little about being a young lad and growing up to age eight in Beijing?

HUMMEL: Well, we lived in Peking in a mission compound, which housed the College of Chinese Studies, where my father was on the faculty. We had Chinese servants. We were much more attached to them, and they to us, than is likely today. Our principal Amah, for my sister and me, had been hired in Peking, before I was born and while my parents were studying Chinese in the Peking Language School. The Amah moved with my parents to Shanxi Province, where my sister and I were born, and then moved back to Peking with us when my father was transferred there when I was three years old. We had our own, full-time rickshaw puller, who took my sister and me to the American school along the dusty, dirty streets. I think that my parents tried a little to isolate us, for health reasons, from the local environment, but we got around quite a bit. Our amah used to take us out secretly, without the knowledge of our parents, to buy Chinese candies from street peddlers. I spoke Chinese before I spoke English. Other American missionary kids in Peking in those days all learned Chinese very well because of the intimate contact with the Chinese household staff.

Q: Would that have been "Mandarin" Chinese?

HUMMEL: Yes.

Q: What kind of missionaries were your parents?

HUMMEL: My father was a teacher and then was principal of a middle school, and later was on the faculty of a Mission-run language school for missionaries and scholars and businessmen and military officers (including Gen. Stilwell) in Peking.

Q: I meant, what denomination?

HUMMEL: Congregational, under what was called the American Board of Missions.

Q: Well, you left Beijing in 1928. What was the situation in China when you left?

HUMMEL: We left earlier than usual; missionaries were normally on a seven-year cycle, six years followed by a year of "furlough". We left early because Chiang Kai-shek and his troops were moving North, mopping up the war lords, and unifying the country for the first time on the Northern Expedition of 1927. Whenever he took over a place, as in Nanking, there was quite a bit of turmoil, unrest, and shooting-anti-foreign activity as well as turfing out the war lords, but as in Nanking and Chinan cities there had also been serious anti-foreign actions by his troops. The Mission decided that it would be wise for us to leave, one year early, supposedly for "furlough" or home leave.

When we returned to the United States, my father was approached by the Library of Congress and offered a job there because of his scholarship in Chinese studies, which was much rarer then than now. He promptly agreed, left the Mission Board, and we moved here to Washington. He took over his job at the Library. He became a well-known and highly respected China scholar, with some definitive books to his name.

Q: You were eight years old when you came to the United States. What about your education?

HUMMEL: I went to primary school, about a half mile away from here.

Q: In Chevy Chase?

HUMMEL: Yes. Then I went to junior high school nearby. My parents, who had become Quakers by that time, sent me off to a Quaker boarding school near Philadelphia, where I was supposed to spend four years of high school. I was kicked out in the third year for sneaking away at night-it was the "macho" thing to do. I and a couple of buddies took a long, trolley ride into Philadelphia and went to an all-night burlesque show.

Q: Oh, yes. I did that in Los Angeles. I didn't get caught.

HUMMEL: So I spent the rest of that year in Washington, at Woodrow Wilson High School, in Washington, DC. Then, in the following year, they let me back into the boarding school and restored the scholarship I had been given. That was my senior year, when I went back. It was a great school-very well organized and I was given an excellent education.

Q: Was there any particular "concentration" there? Was it general liberal arts?

HUMMEL: General liberal arts and very high quality.

Q: Lots of writing?

HUMMEL: Yes.

Q: So when did you graduate from there?

HUMMEL: In 1937. I almost didn't graduate because they kicked me out again for putting an alarm clock in the Quaker meetinghouse. That was in the last few days before graduation. However, they allowed me to graduate.

Q: I suppose they felt a certain amount of pleasure when they got you out of there. To think of the "silent meeting" of the Quakers. Did the alarm clock go off, or was it just ticking?

HUMMEL: No, one of the faculty heard the ticking. It was a loud alarm clock. He climbed up and saw where we had hidden it above the door.

I went off to Antioch College in Ohio for a year and a half and then dropped out in 1939. In those days it was called "sophomoreitis" when people dropped out at that stage, and believe me it wasn't an accepted thing to do; very hard on my parents, and on me. I simply wasn't doing the work and flunked out. To this day I'm very much in favor of giving youngsters time to figure out what they want to do. Our system is great-much better than any European system. You can allow people to drop out.

Q: You can come in...

HUMMEL: And drop out for a while. You don't have to stay out, but can return and finish a good education, as I did. It's easy to get back into the educational system here in America.

Q: What did you do, then, after that?

HUMMEL: I roamed around the Middle West, hitchhiking and taking odd jobs at various places-in Detroit, Columbus, Ohio, and so on.

Q: The "Depression" was still pretty serious in 1939.

HUMMEL: Yes, but I could always get rather low-paying jobs at department stores as a clerk. One time I worked for a detective agency, but it wasn't at all dramatic. It involved simply being a "shopper" to check up on the clerks.

I did settle down for a time here in Washington. I had had some good biology lab training at Antioch. I was a lab technician at St. Elizabeth's Hospital here in Washington. I also had a job at a Kodak film processing place. I did have some relatively steady jobs.

However, I went back to China in 1940 at the end of this phase, when I was 20. At the Library of Congress my father was planning a six-month stay in China, on a book purchasing mission for the Library of Congress. My parents decided to send me out in advance of their arrival to refurbish my Chinese in a proper language school, and not incidentally to get me out of my roving life (if there had been "hippies" I'd have been one, although drugs were not involved). They were going to follow along later. The tense and worsening situation between the United States and Japan caused their trip to be canceled. So there I was, a young bachelor all alone in Beijing. My Chinese came back with a rush. I learned 40 times faster than anybody else in this language school and got my Beijing accent back. It's pretty prestigious to have that; it's like being able to speak Parisian French.

I was working as an English teacher in a Chinese high school, a Catholic mission high school. I was too dumb to leave before Pearl Harbor, even though the Embassy and my parents were all urging me to leave. So I was interned by the Japanese.

Q: Before we move to that, what was the situation as you saw it at that time? Was Beijing under Japanese control at that time?

HUMMEL: The Japanese had first sliced off Manchuria in 1932. Then they moved on to a full-scale war with China in 1937 and occupied all of the large coastal cities-Shanghai, Beijing, and so on. So they already occupied that part of North China. On Pearl Harbor day, December 8, 1941, in China and Japan, all of the American, British, Canadians, and so on, became "enemy aliens," just as many Japanese here in the United States.

Q: What was life like in Beijing as an American before Pearl Harbor?

HUMMEL: Very pleasant. I was earning enough to afford a bicycle and used to take trips with fellow Americans. I was also fooling around with some of the White Russian girls who lived in Peking, and was fairly close to some of the Chinese students at Fu Jen University where I taught English in their High School.

It was a very pleasant life, and I was really seriously studying Chinese. After I left the language school and moved to Fu Jen to be a teacher of English, I hired a Chinese tutor and read a great deal of Chinese, getting fairly proficient in the written language.

Q: This, of course, was more or less new to you-reading of Chinese and all of that?

HUMMEL: Yes. I had not had any exposure to reading Chinese. I guess I mentioned the White Russians, but that was kind of frivolous. I was also involved with a group of young people, some of them teachers at Yenching University, right outside of Beijing, which was an American mission-run university. And other people like that-mostly Americans.

Q: Were there Chinese who were particularly attracted toward the Americans, or because the Japanese were there and, perhaps, because of the influence of the Kuomintang? Was there something of an anti-Western tendency among the Chinese?

HUMMEL: No, not at all, because the United States was supporting Chiang Kai-shek in Chungking. Americans were, I think, at least as welcome as any other foreigners. Of course, nobody liked the Japanese occupiers. Relationships otherwise were very easy and pleasant. We still, of course, enjoyed "extraterritorial" status, which wasn't abolished until the war was almost over. We didn't have to worry very much about local police or harassment, except possibly from the Japanese.

Q: We were giving support to the Chinese. Were the American volunteers flying at that time?

HUMMEL: Yes.

Q: So it was not covert assistance to China against the Japanese.

HUMMEL: No, it was quite public and open, although the Flying Tiger American group was not officially under the U.S. Air Force until after Pearl Harbor brought us into an official state of war.

Q: Did the Japanese try to "take it out" on the Americans?

HUMMEL: No. They didn't want to take on foreigners in 1940, when I arrived. As it turned out, they had already bitten off more than they could chew in China itself. As you know, they got bogged down and never captured Chungking, although they tried mightily quite a few times. They lost a lot of men doing it, as did the Nationalists, in resisting them.

I don't know what would have happened if they had managed to overrun all of China. Then they might have felt that they didn't need good relations with our countries. But they did need good relations before the Pearl Harbor attack, particularly for trade.

Q: Were there any warnings prior to Pearl Harbor? Was life just going on normally?

HUMMEL: Nobody suspected that the Japanese were going to attack Pearl Harbor. However, there was a general feeling that foreigners who didn't have a specific reason for staying in Japanese-occupied areas of China ought to leave. The Embassy was sending around circulars to that effect.

Q: But you were there, doing your usual thing.

HUMMEL: I was having a very good time and I felt a sense of accomplishment in what I was doing in language study. I was making quite considerable progress.

Q: Where was our Embassy at the time? It was in Chungking, wasn't it?

HUMMEL: Yes, it was in Chungking. However, in Beijing there was the old Embassy "compound" with over 100 Marine Guards left over from the time when the capital was in Beijing, before the Kuomintang established its capital in Nanking. I shouldn't have said "Embassy". We called it the "Legation." It actually wasn't even a Legation. It was the Consulate General in Beijing, because the Embassy was in Chungking.

Q: The Embassy had been in Nanking until...

HUMMEL: Some time in 1938, when the Japanese turfed it out of Nanking. The Embassy moved up the Yangtze River to Chungking to stay in Free China, and we didn't recognize the Puppet Chinese government established by the Japanese.

Q: Well, did you have much contact with the Consulate General in Beijing?

HUMMEL: Very little. Only toward the end, when they were attempting to withdraw the Marine Guards, which should have been a signal to anybody like me to leave. At that time they called me in, along with many others, and urged us all to leave.

Q: Was there a sizable American community in Beijing at the time?

HUMMEL: I don't know the total size of the American community there, in Beijing itself. When we were rounded up more than a year later and sent off to an internment camp, quite some distance from Beijing, we had about 3,000 people there. This was the Western community in the North China area. There were about 3,000 people, including more than 500 Catholic priests and nuns who all wound up in the internment camp.

Q: This included British, French, and the whole European contingent?

HUMMEL: And a few Free French. Of course, the Vichy French were not interned, being allies of Germany.

Q: They didn't get locked up.

HUMMEL: I made two efforts-I was part of a group and not the instigator-to escape from Beijing, but each fell through when the promised liaison with communist guerrillas collapsed. We would need help in being taken care of and escorted across Japanese-dominated territory on our way back to Chungking, and each time those who were in contact with the communists in the Western Hills nearby thought they had everything arranged, the communist guerrillas backed out.

Q: This is prior to your being rounded up? What happened? Were you told by the Japanese just to stay at home?

HUMMEL: After December 8 we were told to stay at home for about a week. Then-and I think that it was more or less voluntary-I moved from where I had been living alone to join a group of former Yenching University Americans who had been living outside Beijing and were forced to move into the city, to a property owned by the U.S. Government near the Legation, called San Kuan Miao. There were huge city walls in those days, which have since been torn down. We enemy aliens were more or less free to roam around the city inside the walls. We could even get permission to bicycle outside the city for the day. The situation was very relaxed, although it was called "internment", and we couldn't leave.

Eventually, on March 25, 1943-more than a year after Pearl Harbor-we were all rounded up and told to pack two suitcases which we could carry. We were sent off by train to a place in Shandong Province. Shandong Province is the one that more or less sticks out into the Yellow Sea toward Korea.

Q: It had been under Germany at one time.

HUMMEL: That's right, and later dominated by the Japanese after World War I. The former Presbyterian mission compound at Wei-hsien where they put us was pretty far away and rather isolated. It had a very large school and a hospital. We occupied the dormitories. The Japanese guards lived in the adjacent area where the former foreign missionaries had lived.

Life in the internment camp was really not all that bad. We were given the ingredients, equipment and fuel for preparing food, and most people were busy with camp jobs: cooking, cleaning, taking care of kids or running the school. My job was in the hospital, in charge of the lab, where I did simple blood counts, stool examinations for amoeba, and so on. We had organized athletic activity and had a small softball field. By the end of the internment there had been more births than deaths in this camp. Nutrition was not at all good, but we had visits and supplies, including hospital supplies, through the Swiss Red Cross representative to China.

I didn't manage to escape until May, 1944. I wound up as a member of a Chinese Nationalist guerrilla unit, not far away, outside the internment camp, where I stayed for a year and three months until V-J Day in August, 1945.

Q: When you were in the camp, were you able to follow the course of the war pretty well?

HUMMEL: Yes. Somebody had brought the parts and cobbled together a clandestine radio receiver. However, the information wasn't circulated very widely, because we didn't want the Japanese to know that we had such a radio. We had an internal government setup within the internment camp-not elected, but appointed by agreement. We had a Camp Council and a Camp Head to deal with the Japanese. It was rather well organized. One of the internees, Langdon Gilkey, who later wound up at Divinity School at Harvard, who happened to be in Beijing at Yenching University, subsequently wrote a book, called "Shandong Compound." This was a description of the human side-the frictions, the incompatibilities, and the way people interacted in this environment for more than three years.

Q: Beginning at the end of 1940, you had your first year in Beijing during the halcyon days of the Japanese, when they were overrunning everything in their path.

HUMMEL: I arrived in China in September, 1940. Pearl Harbor, of course, didn't come until December, 1941, more than a year later.

Q: Did you see any change in the attitude of the Japanese? I'm thinking of when the United States entered the war in December, 1941. During the first six months of 1942 the Japanese could take practically anything that they wanted. Then things started to become more difficult, and their conquests started to be rolled back. Were the Japanese well-informed themselves about what was happening?

HUMMEL: I had no way of telling what the Japanese troops knew.

Q: But did you have much to do with the Japanese? Or were they just sort of "out there"?

HUMMEL: They were "out there" and they were conspicuous in their policing activities around Beijing. We Westerners were certainly conspicuous after Pearl Harbor, because we all had to wear armbands, proclaiming that we were "enemy aliens." If you had to go to a Japanese Government office for anything, when you passed the Japanese sentries outside, you had to bow. If you didn't, you were slapped. However, I think that that was almost the only change from the past in that first year, when we were under loose internment, within the walls of the old city of Beijing.

Q: How did your escape come about?

HUMMEL: I had a friend named Laurence Tipton, a British chap who died recently, and who has written a book about his experiences in China before we were interned and also about life in the camp and with the guerrillas. He had worked for BAT, British-American Tobacco Company. He had had the foresight to bring along small gold bars and other substitutes for money. He and I—with my knowledge of the Chinese language, since he didn't know much Chinese—bribed a few of the Chinese coolies, who were coming in and out to work in the internment camp. We asked them to carry and mail letters out. I wouldn't have known whom to write to, but Tipton did. He had a lot of business contacts. He would write letters to them. We would talk to the Chinese coolies and ask them if they knew anybody we could get in touch with.

Eventually, contact was made, but, oddly enough instigated by the guerrilla unit that we finally ended up with. They arranged to smuggle letters in to us, which promptly got into Tipton's hands. Of course, it was immediately taken to our Camp Government. The guerrillas offered to come in with large forces and do away with the Japanese guards. They would quickly construct an air field, the Americans would come and fly us all away to Free China. This, of course, was a harebrained idea—not practical, for many different reasons.

However, after the initial contact was made, we kept up with it. Eventually, it was decided by the camp government that a small group of probably two people would be given authorization by our camp management to escape and go to these guerrillas and establish contact with Chungking, presumably. The camp would then have a liaison base outside. Actually, I was not nominated at first. The camp government decided that Tipton should be one to go. He was a seasoned China traveler with good judgement. A very talented Catholic priest who was older, spoke and wrote excellent Chinese (better than I could) was initially nominated to go along with Tipton. However, at the last moment the priest's superiors were afraid-and they were right-that the Japanese might retaliate against other Catholic clerics, and he was forbidden to go and I was put in at the last moment.

The arrangements worked well for getting out of the camp. Very simply, we had a small ladder which we used to get over a brick wall. We put a stepping stool outside, stood on that, jumped over the barbed wire, and we were out. All this while friends stood guard to warn us if the Japanese guard at that section of the wall were to approach. We met a group of the guerrillas-some 10 of them-about a mile away in a clump of trees near a cemetery, which we had designated as a meeting place.

Q: Were there any repercussions when you escaped? Did they have a pretty good system of knowing who was in the compound?

HUMMEL: Yes. The people in the camp waited until the afternoon to report that they thought that someone was missing. The Japanese got very excited and lined everybody up and counted and recounted them. I had been living in a large room with about six people. Three of my roommates, whose beds were nearest to mine, as well as others who slept near where Tipton used to sleep, were knocked about by the Japanese, but not very hard. They were put into a sort of makeshift jail. They were on bread and water, I think, for four or five days. After that, things calmed down, except that the Japanese greatly increased the physical security of the place. They dug a big, deep ditch and raised a higher wall. It would have been much harder and more complicated for anyone else to get out, and nobody else tried. The Japanese instituted several extra head-count lineups for about a month, and that was about all of the repercussions.

Q: Isn't "Tenko" the Japanese term for head counts?

HUMMEL: I don't know. The repercussions of our escape were not too bad.

Q: It sounds as if there were considerable differences between this camp and those down in Thailand and Burma. One hears about the British, particularly from Singapore or Hong Kong...

HUMMEL: You're absolutely right. The key was how close a camp was to Japan, and the oftener "Gaimusho" people, from the Japanese Foreign Ministry, could visit the camp. Foreign Ministry officials had a hand in advising the Japanese camp commander, who was a military man. The Ministry officials could not give orders to the military, but, by visiting the camps from time to time, they helped to ensure that conditions didn't get too bad. We were in the camp closest to Japan-in North China. The internment camps in Shanghai were not good at all and were quite bad in some respects. In the Philippines the internment camp at Santo Tomas was quite bad. Singapore, as you said, and Borneo-the farther you were away from Japan, the worse off you were. Of course the civilian internment camps are what I'm talking about, not the POW camps.

Q: Now, who were the guerrillas? Where did they operate?

HUMMEL: That's a long story. I'm slowly working away at a history of this guerrilla outfit, based on the written memoirs of the commander. It was composed of local people from the same area or Hsien in Shandong, and many of them were related to each other. The commander himself had been a middle school teacher. He patriotically joined up with some force or other in the western part of Shandong Province, close to Hopei Province shortly after the Japanese attacked China in full force in 1937. At that time there was a fervent movement to oppose the invading Japanese.

In spite of having no military training at all, he and others obtained some weapons and were formed into units. However, they were rather ineffective and disorganized,; and were rolled over very quickly by the Japanese. Also very quickly, they began to squabble among themselves. With one thing and another, they had so many disasters that they wound up back in their own home Hsien. They had no support from Chungking at all. With no money-and few arms-they managed to start a very small scale resistance to local puppet Chinese troops, who occupied that area. This sort of thing happened all over Shandong Province. Shandong people are known for being tough, militant, and pioneer types. They're the ones who colonized Manchuria, for instance.

These little guerrilla units gradually put pressure on police posts and Puppet units-we used the term Puppet for Chinese who were collaborating with the Japanese. Gradually, the guerrillas spread out from tiny little areas, maybe just one village which was conspiring against the police and Puppet supporters. From time to time they would attack and rob a small police post, taking over another village or so. This unit, the 15th Tsung-Tui, had expanded to a point where, when Tipton and I arrived, there were about 8,000 armed troops in an area 10 miles by 20 miles. The Japanese didn't come into the area, unless they were sent on mopping up expeditions.

Q: The Japanese just had too many of these areas to deal with.

HUMMEL: That's right. From time to time we would receive a warning that Japanese or Puppet troops were advancing on the border of our area. We would pack up everything that we could pack up and become mobile. They actually had machinery to manufacture bolt-action rifles and gunpowder. They would bury all of this stuff. Then they would wait and try to stay out of the way of the Japanese, until they left. There was no point in a frontal battle, which is what the Japanese were trying to force them into. Fundamentally, the Japanese would sweep back and forth through our area, sometimes for as long as two weeks, trying to capture the guerrilla headquarters and leaders.

Q: The guerrillas' feeling was that they could outlast the Japanese, because the [Japanese] weren't going to stay.

HUMMEL: That's right.

Q: What was your role? What were they using you for?

HUMMEL: Tipton and I were considered valuable assets, and we were given nominal military ranks, and were regarded as Advisers. We sent a couple of messengers back by land, who eventually arrived in Chungking and contacted the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) detachment there. Eventually, they were returned to us by air-by parachute drop. They brought money and some medicines for the camp, which the camp really didn't need. We didn't need the money, either. Plans were being made, right at the end of the war, for a large air drop of ammunition and a small unit of OSS troops-Americans to drop into our guerrilla area. The thinking was that it seemed possible then that American troops might be landing somewhere on the coast of China as a further step toward the defeat of Japan. There was no American unit in all of Shandong Province, and it could turn out very useful to have some Americans in place.

Unfortunately, the weather was bad the day that the air drop was supposed to come, and the planes flew back to Chungking. Let's see, this was probably the second air drop scheduled. The first air drop was when they sent our messengers back. The second air drop was going to be ammunition, and without any Americans. The third air drop I'll come to in a moment. For the second air drop there was a ground fog, and they couldn't see the panels we had put out to mark the drop site, so they flew back to Free China. I learned later that their plane had engine trouble and couldn't get all the way back to their base in Sichuan Province so the crew all had to parachute out, while the plane crashed.

Our unit was of course Nationalist, rather than Communist. There were also communist guerrillas nearby, who had clear lines of communications all the way back to Yen-an, their headquarters. By accident, we had been contacted by Nationalists. If we had wound up with the Communists, Tipton and I could have walked out through Communist territory and gotten back to Chungking, had we chosen to do so. But of course we were emissaries of the camp, and our purpose was to maintain liaison with the camp.

The Nationalist guerrillas were split into quite a few separated, and sometimes hostile, groups. The communist guerrillas were much more unified, and could use troops gathered from many of their "liberated" areas to mount a campaign to knock off the Nationalist guerrilla units, one by one. By this time, the fragile entente between Communists and Nationalists that initially was effective during the early years of their war (beginning in 1937) had broken down as early as 1940. As the war dragged on, mutual hostilities were commonplace between Communist and Nationalist units and antipathies were high. In fact there was a three-cornered war going on, and it was difficult to say which side was more at fault. As the Japanese looked more and more like losers, the communists in Shandong systematically started to wipe out Nationalist guerrilla areas one by one, with an eye on occupying more of the territory at the time the war ended.

The communist guerrillas drove us entirely out of our "home" area. For the last 10 days or two weeks of the war Tipton and I were moving two or three times a day, keeping ahead of the Japanese in areas which were usually controlled by the "puppet" troops.

Q: Were the communists actually attacking you?

HUMMEL: Oh, yes. They attacked and took over for themselves virtually the whole area which my guerrilla unit had carved out. It was very bloody warfare, involving the assault by Communists against our large, fortified village strong points with high mud walls, and gates. One by one, they reduced those points. The communists had mortars and a few pieces of artillery. Instead of fighting the Japanese they decided to "mop us up."

Q: Was this Nationalist guerrilla group made up of patriotic people owing allegiance to the Nationalist government in Chungking.

HUMMEL: They were devout Chinese nationalists, with a small "n." They were highly patriotic and anti-Japanese. Interestingly, it wasn't until the messengers that we had sent to Chungking came back by airdrop that the top officers of this guerrilla unit discovered what a mess Chungking was. It was very disillusioning to them (and to me) to hear reports of the corruption and incapacity of the Chinese Nationalists, as recounted by the messengers.

Q: Did you feel that it was within your mandate to keep an eye on the internment camp so that if anything happened...

HUMMEL: Oh, yes. More especially, we would send reports-again, by Chinese coolies-into the camp to tell the internees about the war situation, particularly conditions in the Pacific area. Sometimes, we would get replies from the camp. We had reported to the camp when we sent the messengers off to Chungking. When they came back by air, we reported that also. We asked them if they wanted any of the medicine which had come in by air, and which was intended for the camp. They said, no, they didn't need it. They already had an arrangement, as I said, through the Swiss to get medical supplies. Besides, it would be too dangerous to try to send them the medical supplies which we had received. Yes, there were communications like that.

Q: How did your guerrilla unit feel about the communists?

HUMMEL: There was longstanding hatred between them, based on a lot of warfare and mutual attacks between the two types of guerrillas. People in this unit were highly anti-communist as well as being highly anti-Japanese.

Q: Looking at this situation from a great distance, one has this feeling of non-involvement. The communists were trying to mobilize the will of the people. However, this obviously was a case where they weren't tapping into the popular will, at this point and in this place. I take it that these people whom you were with were not landlords and did not represent the corrupt forces in China.

HUMMEL: I wouldn't say all that. I would say that in the areas where the communists operated they were very highly organized and were supported by the people. They were Chinese, after all. They were very adroit in making sure that the people were the "water," and that they were the "fish" to swim in that "water." There was a lot of discipline, which you couldn't say about the other guerrilla units. The other, Nationalist units, except for the one I was with, had virtually all come to some kind of half way "live and let live" understanding with the Japanese and the "puppet forces." I think that that was true of virtually all of the Nationalist guerrilla units. Maybe one or two had not done so. This is the excuse which the communists used-and still do-for attacking them and wiping them out, because so many of them were "running dogs" of the Japanese. That was not at all true of the unit I was with.

I didn't try to have much conversation with the Chinese communists, but I've collected some of their writings, including some rather specific Chinese communist reminiscences of the war in that area. As I say, I'm working slowly on translating and annotating the memoirs of the guerrilla commander. It's like something straight out of "The Romance of the Three Kingdoms" a classical Chinese novel.

I had never met the previous guerrilla commander, Wang Shang-chih. He had an opium habit and went to Tsingtao, the big port in Shandong Province, for an operation, of course under an assumed name. The Japanese picked him up and "converted" him. He was sending letters to his former subordinates in our area, advocating surrender to the Japanese, using the argument, "Why should we fight? It just means hardship for you," and so on. He had a lot of prestige, originally, and more than the commander that I got to know. He was responsible for actually building up the guerrilla unit, and was well regarded up to that time. So there was beginning to be talk among the troops of the our guerrilla unit that they should follow their former commander, stop resisting the Japanese, and have an easier life. The deputy commander of the unit, who moved up to be the commander, decided that surrender to the Japanese was intolerable, though he pretended to agree to it.

He arranged a meeting on the border, with some Japanese and Chinese "puppet" officials, to which the Japanese brought this captured commander. At the right moment, just like out of a bit of Chinese history, "my" commander, the former deputy commander, surrounded the place with his own troops. He captured everybody, shot all the Japanese except one, whom they tortured for a time. They buried him alive, which was rather brutal, but standard for both sides. They captured their own commander, who, of course, had to be locked up or sequestered.

Q: For you personally, working in this atmosphere, did you learn things about the Chinese which you couldn't have learned anywhere else? How the system worked?

HUMMEL: Oh, yes. I was on fairly intimate terms with the Chinese in the headquarters unit, with whom I worked all the time, and very close to a few. I also got to know some of the ordinary villagers with whom we lived. They all talked freely about everything. I think that I picked up a good feeling for what many Chinese are like-and, indeed, what Chinese bureaucracies are like, because the guerrillas had their own brand of bureaucratic rivalries. I learned a lot about the Chinese, in an environment that I previously had not experienced. I flatter myself that I can, perhaps, understand better than most the way the Chinese, and even the Chinese communists, think and operate. I understood the pressures that were on them and some of the reasons why they do things they may not want to do or prefer not to do. However, their "heads would roll," bureaucratically speaking, if they didn't. My understanding of this kind of peer-group pressure is an advantage in understanding how the present government, and officials, and common people, feel.

Q: What were some of the impressions which you got of the Chinese bureaucracy? I think that this is very important, because China later became a large part of your career. Was it primarily hierarchical? How did it work?

HUMMEL: The first thing I would say is that this guerrilla unit was a military dominated bureaucracy. It was not like what I came in contact with later on. It was very "clean"-there was virtually no corruption, because everybody knew what everybody else was doing. One of the "handlers" assigned to Tipton and me at one point, when we weren't doing very much but were waiting for the messengers to come back from Chungking, turned out to have a relatively minor opium habit. This was not common at all in this area, and such people were looked down on for having it. Anyway, he was so obnoxious that Tipton and I couldn't stand him, and he was removed from duty with us. From that time on, nobody lived with us; we were quartered in villagers' homes, as were many of the Headquarters unit.

The bureaucracy was military dominated, and it was run by people who had little training, but were doing their best. The school system was really quite a good one, considering the circumstances. It was based on the school system that had existed previously, which had been supported, not by the central or the provincial government, but by the local villagers and the county. The rationing and tax collection system, and so forth, was, I thought, extremely well administered. You couldn't exactly call it super efficient, and of course it would be disrupted from time to time by Japanese security sweeps.

They were puritanical about sex, following traditional Chinese norms, but they could be very bawdy in their language and actions. They were really striving to be upright, honest, Chinese nationalists, and doing a fair job of it.

Q: How did the peasants relate to this organization?

HUMMEL: Well, they were all very closely knit. If the peasants had been asked or given a choice, they would have wished that all the troops would go away. I saw no signs that any of them were pro-Japanese, pro-communist, or anything else. The farmers gave the military people credit for wanting the best for China and for having a valid reason for doing what they were doing to resist the Japanese in a patriotic way. The peasants gave them credit for these things. So it was a fairly good organization. This is what I believe, at any rate. I would have known if they felt real resentment, because it would have come out in small ways. Probably not directly, but in small ways, and easily detected because we lived very close to them in the villages.

Q: How did you hear about the end of the war? The communists were already coming in and keeping you moving at this point, so I take it that the end of World War II in China was really...

HUMMEL: We had access to radio reports, and indeed published a mimeographed weekly newspaper. We knew vaguely that something terrific had happened-some new bomb had been dropped on Japan, and then nothing seemed to happen for a day or two. We were getting garbled reports when the surrender of the Japanese actually occurred. There was a false report of the surrender-I think about two days before the actual surrender. As soon as it became obvious that the surrender had occurred, Tipton and I asked to be sent back to the internment camp and they immediately made arrangements to do so. We arrived the day after a bunch of Americans from OSS had been dropped by parachute-with food, supplies, and so on, in a relief effort for the internment camp. Marching back to the camp at the head of a column of uniformed guerrilla troops was quite an experience, and we were warmly welcomed.

We then stayed in the camp until we were evacuated by air to Peking. This took about a month, because ground transportation was being sabotaged by communist guerrillas who wanted to hinder any return of Nationalist troops to take over from the Japanese. I was asked by the camp authorities, now the OSS group, to lead a team outside the camp to liaise with the Chinese communists nearby. The railroad had been cut in both directions, both to the sea and to Tsingtao, and the civil war was already starting between the Nationalists and Communists. We wanted to use the railway to evacuate the people in the camp. We trekked to a communist headquarters and asked them communists to lay off and even do some repair, so that we could get people out by rail. I spent two days with them in a nearby place as an official emissary from the camp.

Q: Did they know you or feel that you were "tainted" by your association with the nationalists?

HUMMEL: No. I didn't feel that and I never felt it because later on, when I returned to China after diplomatic relations were officially established, they knew my Chinese name, which was fortunate. My name is an easily recognizable Chinese one. My later contacts with communists in 1945-46 showed that they did not feel any animosity because I was on the KMT side during the anti-Japanese war. And by the 1970's in Washington, and the 1980's when I met went back to Beijing, none of us was blamed for any of this by the people who were fighting against the Japanese during the war.

Q: How did you get out of China?

HUMMEL: Finally, we had to be flown out from a local airfield. I flew out to Beijing. I can't remember exactly why, after all of this, but I was so enamored by China that I stayed on an extra year, working for the United Nations relief program, UNRRA [United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration]. I was doing survey trips, mostly into Chinese Communist areas, to find out what was needed for relief there. It was a fascinating time. This was during the Civil War, the Cease-fire Mission, and the Marshall Mission. Of course, as it turned out, we never turned over practically any relief supplies to the Communists. It was all sent to help the Nationalists. This was one of the reasons why I became disgusted and went home. Not that I liked the Communists, but I didn't think that it was the right policy.

Q: How was UNRRA run in China at that time?

HUMMEL: Headquarters was in Tientsin, about 60 or 70 miles East of Beijing and near the sea coast. I worked out of headquarters because of my knowledge of Chinese and also because I was young and adventurous. They sent me to some very odd places-all the way up into Manchuria, when the fighting was going on there. They sent me to investigate reports that relief supplies were being stolen in a Nationalist controlled area.

They sent me into an area that was entirely flooded out, in southern Hopei Province. The Communists outside the area had breached the dikes and flooded the fields right up to the brick and mud walls of Yung-Nien town, the county seat. There were ex-"puppet" troops inside the walls, now converted to supposedly loyal Nationalist troops who had turned their coats. The Nationalist Government in Beijing was air dropping huge gunny sacks of bread. They killed about four people and damaged quite a few houses with these bread sacks. However, they were sustaining life inside the city. I negotiated an agreement, which was promptly broken by the Communists, under which they would allow the purchase from outside of a certain amount of wheat and wheat products, cooking oil, and so on. This was to go into the city under safeguard. Theoretically, this food would be for the benefit of civilians, not the military. This was a ridiculous distinction. The military would obviously get their "payoff." That was the second time I came into direct contact with the Communists.

Q: What was your impression of the Communists you dealt with at that time?

HUMMEL: Very straightforward, stern-not hostile but very military and very disciplined. They were also very tricky. Perhaps I shouldn't say that, as every human being is capable of deceit. In other words, they were capable of breaking their word. When people are told to break their word by higher authority, that's what they do. But I was impressed with them. They were businesslike.

Q: Who were your superiors in UNRRA? Where did they come from?

HUMMEL: They were all Americans. One was an American Chinese, named Paul Young. He ran the office. I don't remember all the other people. There were about five or six of us. I was the "field man."

Q: Did they seem to know what they were doing? Did these people understand the situation and how to deal with it, or were they people straight out of the United States at an unfamiliar and difficult time?

HUMMEL: The responsible people knew what they were doing. Most of the "new" people had some experience of Chungking, in one capacity or another. They moved food into the major cities, and this worked. Of course, the Army, Navy, and Air Force, like everyone else, cooperated very well, indeed. They supplied most of the airlift.

Q: You'd been living in this kind of "never never world" in the Shandong Peninsula, either in an internment camp or with Nationalist guerrillas. Did you find that the corruption that one hears so much of on the Nationalist side had "taken over" pretty much or not?

HUMMEL: Yes. Most of the corruption was in Shanghai, which I visited a couple of times. I got to know the OSS [Office of Strategic Services, World War II predecessor to the CIA] people there and tried to join up, but they wouldn't have me, partly because I was not a "settled, sober citizen." I was too much of a maverick.

Q: You weren't "Ivy League?"

HUMMEL: Well, that wasn't it; had some rough characters. Besides, I had never finished college. Anyway, I went to OSS headquarters in Shanghai a couple of times and to see other people in Shanghai. It was quite obvious to me that the Nationalists were "messing up" the situation in so many ways in their attitude. They treated the people, not as liberated "brothers," but as dastardly collaborators with the Japanese, quite unnecessarily alienating people and "ripping them off," right and left. There was a lot of corruption. It was very unpleasant to see, too. I didn't like it at all.

Q: Did this affect the other Americans there, watching this, too?

HUMMEL: Yes, but it was balanced by a strong distaste for the communists, who had their own "black marks," so to say. They were very tough. Indeed, as I said, not very many people had the experience I did of seeing communist troops trying to wipe out a Nationalist guerrilla unit. I had seen that first hand. But there were a lot of stories to this effect, circulating around.

The "China Lobby" in the US was working full blast. Demonizing the Chinese Communists was a very popular thing.

Q: So you worked for UNRRA for about a year and then...

HUMMEL: The war ended in August, 1945. I began working for UNRRA almost immediately thereafter. Finally, I left China in June, 1946.

Q: Of your own volition?

HUMMEL: Oh, yes, of my own volition.

Q: At the time you left, what was your impression of where China was going?

HUMMEL: Well, let me tell this little vignette, and that will answer your question. Walter Robertson was a well-known State Department official. I think that he was the civilian deputy to General George Marshall, at "Cease-fire Headquarters" in Beijing. The objective of General Marshall at the time was to negotiate the establishment of a coalition government in the disputed areas, particularly in North China. James Grant, now head of UNICEF [United Nations Interim Children's Emergency Fund], was also born in China. I met him there in Beijing. He was asked by Walter Robertson to bring some people to him for breakfast meetings so that Robertson could talk with them about China. So Jim Grant conveyed an invitation for breakfast, just Robertson and me.

Robertson asked me, first off, to give my views on the prospects for getting the Chinese Communists and Nationalists together in a coalition arrangement in North China to avert a civil war. I said that there was virtually no prospect of success. I had seen both sides. There was too much mutual hatred. It was hard for me to imagine that they could ever work together. If they ever did work together, temporarily, they would split apart again. I said that both sides had strong reasons for wanting to break any agreements, if they could get some territorial advantage out of it. I don't think that I even got that far, when Robertson jumped up from the breakfast table-there were just the two of us-and stomped around the room, berating me for my lack of "patriotism"! He said that they were going to make a coalition government work and that I shouldn't say that it wouldn't function. I was really "pissed off" at this performance. I had been asked for my opinion. I gave it, and then was accused of...

Q: Robertson, of course, became Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs during the Eisenhower administration. He was a great supporter of Chiang Kai-shek.

HUMMEL: He was part of what people loosely called, "The China Lobby."

Q: He was very influential. Apparently, he continued to display this attitude, from what I gather from other people. You weren't supposed to say the "unspeakable."

HUMMEL: Anybody like Teddy White, who wrote a famous book, called Thunder Out of China exposing the vulnerabilities and malfeasance of the Chinese Nationalists-anybody who did that was unpatriotic and possibly a communist, in Robertson's view. This was all raised later on in the hearings conducted by Senator Joseph McCarthy.

Q: Speaking of that, did you have any contact with the "Old China Hands?"

HUMMEL: Not in China, no. Well, yes, I met some of them, but it was just a nodding acquaintance.

I got tired of these [UNRRA] survey trips and realized that my reports weren't going to go anywhere. I knew that I had to return to the United States some time and finish up college so that my skills would be more marketable. I left China in June, 1946. I went down to Shanghai and obtained passage to the United States as a "workaway" crew member (that means a full crew member, but picked up not in the home port but midway during the voyage) in the engine room of an American Liberty freighter called the M.V. Hook Hitch. It took two months to get across the Pacific because we went to Guam, had to offload the cargo that we had and then had to load other cargo. That's how I got back to the States.

Later on, through the auspices of some good friends from Westtown School I had a very lively and interesting six months in New York City as a lecturer for the United China Relief organization. They would send me out to lecture to various groups to raise relief money. As a special promotion we put on a show in Kansas as part of a national fund raiser for United China Relief. Secretary of State Stettinius came to one of these observances. I had an instant immersion into huckstering and Madison Avenue, center of the advertising industry in New York City. All of this was fascinating for a young man, fresh out of radically different and exotic experiences abroad.

Q: Was there a "line" that you found? I would think that in view of what you had seen you couldn't really talk about the situation in China as it was.

HUMMEL: That wasn't a problem. I had no desire to see the communists take over China. I really didn't like them. I had been somewhat indoctrinated by my Chinese friends, all of whom were on the Nationalist side, even though they wrung their hands about Nationalist shortcomings. I could and did say a lot about the good things that were going on in China-the rebuilding, the schools, all of the activities that had come to life, and the bravery of the Chinese Nationalists. There were far more Chinese Nationalist troops killed during World War II than Chinese Communist troops, in the frontal battles that they had repeatedly with huge numbers of Japanese troops. Those battles were not fought against the communists, nor did the communists lose nearly as many men.

On the need for relief in China we worked out a presentation containing the facts. I would present a lecture and answer questions. I was able to do sincerely what I was supposed to do, and that was to raise funds for United China Relief; the needs were truly great.

Q: When did the civil war end in China? Was it in 1949?

HUMMEL: Yes. In 1949 Chiang Kai-shek fled to Taiwan, and the communists took over Mainland China.

Q: When you were giving these lectures, things were still in a state of flux?

HUMMEL: A hot civil war was going on, particularly in Manchuria, which took a long time to fall to the Communists. As I know now from our records, the Chinese Nationalists, over our strong objections, insisted on trying to hold onto Manchuria. They lost an enormous number of Nationalist troops up there when it finally fell to the communists. Then the civil war continued, with the communists getting more and more turncoats from among the Nationalist troops. Whole Nationalist units would come over to the communists. The snowball rolled on until Chiang Kai-shek was pushed off [the mainland].

By this time I was at the University of Chicago. My father was a University of Chicago graduate. I took a kind of comprehensive exam designed for servicemen who had had their education interrupted during World War II. The University of Chicago had this unusual system. I became a Master of Arts, after two and a half years, without ever getting a B.A..

Q: This was the idea of-what was his name?

HUMMEL: Robert Maynard Hutchins.

Q: He was the President of the university. The university was very progressive.

HUMMEL: I had one deficiency in the entry requirements that I had to make up. That was in economics. I managed to pass all of the rest and then promptly went into the University of Chicago School of Chinese Studies. I got an M. A. there in 1949. I was made a member of Phi Beta Kappa. I don't know how they ever wangled that and it was quite unexpected, as far as I was concerned.

Then I came back to Washington, DC. I first spent six months beginning in June, 1959, working in ONI, the Office of Naval Intelligence. Then, through friends, I got a job in FE, the Far East Division of the State Department.

Q: First of all, in Chinese studies, did you find that the academic world was different from the world you had experienced directly, yourself? Your father, of course, was a Chinese scholar, so the area wasn't unfamiliar to you. Did you find it difficult, coming from your very practical and down to earth experiences, to accept the academic view of China or not?

HUMMEL: No, I don't think that I ever felt that. I'd been in college before and knew what the colleges were like. The subject matter was totally different from before, but I think I was very adaptable. I knew before I went to the University of Chicago what it would be like, so I just adjusted to it.

Q: How long were you in ONI?

HUMMEL: From about June to December, 1950.

Q: What were you doing there?

HUMMEL: I was an analyst in the Far East Section. We had a small unit. We would arrive about 4:00 AM and would look at the newspapers and telegrams and write up brief, "punchy" headline items for the Captain. The Captain, in turn, would "brief" an Admiral. The Admiral then would brief the Chief of Naval Operations later on in the morning. It was interesting and fun. I learned a very complex skill, that is, reducing a description of complex matters into a few, short paragraphs.

Q: Was the Navy preparing to do something at that time about the situation in China?

HUMMEL: Well, no, our unit was just a small part of a global briefing mechanism.

Q: You were just observing developments.

HUMMEL: Yes, all over the Far East. I was introduced to situations all over the Far East. I would write up items about anything that was happening.

Q: Then you moved...

HUMMEL: Directly into the State Department in FE/P-the Office of Public Affairs in the Far Eastern Division. This was a dual operation. We were active in support of some of the people who were being harried by Senator Joseph McCarthy and his friends. We were also operating and managing the whole USIS (United States Information Service) program in the Far East. I was involved on the China side, of course.

Q: Was there a USIA, United States Information Agency, at that time or was USIS part of the State Department?

HUMMEL: The OWI [Office of War Information, an independent, executive agency] had folded up when World War II ended. By 1949 USIS had been set up, under the State Department. It included the "Exchange of Persons" and the Fulbright programs as well as information programs..

Q: Walter Robertson would not have been there when you entered the State Department, would he? This was during the Truman administration.

HUMMEL: No, he had been in the State Department and then had left.

Q: He came back later on. Robertson, I guess, served with General Marshall. Then he disappeared. I think he went to Congress, or something, as an adviser or some such thing. He came back to the Department when President Eisenhower came into office in 1953.

HUMMEL: I don't recall that. I never met him in the Department, and he was not head of the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs at that time [1950].

Q: This was the time when the initial attacks against the "China hands" were going on. How were you involved?

HUMMEL: I would help quietly to look something up, whatever it was, to supply the people who were being attacked. They were all Foreign Service Officers and deserved support from the State Department. I can't say that I was intimately involved in this. There were people who were more senior and smarter about this matter than I was. I do remember looking up materials, facts, and figures. We watched TV very carefully to see what we could do to help. But I was also involved in some of the aspects of operating the whole USIS program and exchange of persons.

Q: What types of people were we exchanging at that time-with the Far East?

HUMMEL: I was working on China exclusively. The Japanese end of things was still under the U. S. military.

Q: Probably so, because the military left when the Treaty of Peace was signed in 1951.

HUMMEL: A certain number of Americans went out to teach at Chinese universities. This was before the Communists took over Mainland China. By the time I graduated from the University of Chicago, the communists had already taken over Mainland China. But there were a lot of Chinese scholars who were stranded in places like Hong Kong and Japan, whom we invited into the United States under the Fulbright or other programs. We had an extremely active USIS post in Hong Kong, which I shortly went out to take charge of. It was producing essentially propaganda and informational materials-anti-communist material and competing for the "hearts and minds" of overseas Chinese whom we could reach, including those in Taiwan.

Q: The Korean War was going on when you were in Hong Kong, wasn't it? It started on June 25, 1950. Did that change things for you?

HUMMEL: It changed a lot of things for the China specialists, because there was no longer any lingering hope that we could find a way to live with Mao Zedong. We were at war with him. We had suspended all aid-both military and civilian-to Chiang Kai-shek in 1949, in an effort to build a relationship with the communists, to no avail. A lot of people have forgotten that. We didn't reinstate aid to Taiwan until the attack on the Republic of Korea in June, 1950. The whole mood of our country changed. After all, there was a Sino-Soviet bloc and there was reason to believe that the whole Soviet bloc was testing us out in Korea. It was a matter of life and death, not only for Koreans, but also for American foreign policy in general.

So it was no longer a question of whether one should stand up for the possibility of existing with Communist China. By the way, conditions were pretty grim. They were knocking off landlords and other "undesirable class elements" or "class enemies." It was no longer a question of whether we should speak out about what was going to happen in China. That stage had passed. Nobody knew what was going to happen in China. There was no possibility of a rapprochement with the Chinese Communists.

Q: I remember that I graduated from college in 1950. The students at the time sort of took the view that "We should have diplomatic relations with [Mainland] China." This was the attitude of the "Eastern liberal establishment." It wasn't that we "loved" these people. It was just, "Why not have relations?"

HUMMEL: I would have agreed with that at the time.

Q: Then the Korean War came, and that...

HUMMEL: Ended all of that. So this made life easier for China analysts in the State Department. It is not true that we lost our analytical capabilities here. We were analyzing everything that we could find, in Hong Kong and elsewhere. However, any intellectual strain that might have existed among people like me or John Stewart Service or anyone else ended with this armed attack on us.

Q: There was that period between June 25, 1950, when Kim Il Sung [North Korean leader] attacked South Korea, and around November, 1950, when Chinese Communist troops crossed the Yalu River and ambushed our troops.

HUMMEL: You skipped one enormous event, and that was General MacArthur's landing of troops at Inchon, Korea. That action cut off a lot of North Korean troops in South Korea and was enormously successful. It enabled the United States, and the mostly American forces, to throw all of the North Korean troops into total disarray. I think that landing was in September, 1950.

Q: Yes. Then there was the crossing of the 38th Parallel [of North Latitude, the dividing line between North and South Korea prior to the North Korean Communist attack on South Korea].

HUMMEL: The Chinese Communists had warned us not to cross that parallel.

Q: I'm not sure exactly where you were in FE, but were people wondering what the Chinese Communists would do?

HUMMEL: Yes.

Q: Was there any "feel" for this?

HUMMEL: There was concern about what the Chinese Communists might do. At the same time, there was a feeling, "Why should we go back to the 'status quo ante' and not 'punish' the North Koreans?"

Q: The question was asked, "What is this all about? They tried to take over South Korea by force. Should we really..."

HUMMEL: "Let them go home, lick their wounds, and try again later?"

Q: Although the Chinese Communists had made noises about it, our going North of the 38th parallel, I don't think that there was any thought in our minds of going beyond the Yalu River, although some say that MacArthur had that secret desire.

HUMMEL: No. At the same time, I think it was unrealistic of us to expect that the Chinese Communists would tolerate our being right on their border. Or for their friends, the North Koreans, to be totally annihilated.

Q: But at the time were the China analysts [in FE] suggesting that the Chinese Communists might do something, or was it just cautionary?

HUMMEL: I don't know, because I wouldn't have been directly involved in this kind of policy debate in the Department at that time. I know, from things I've read later, that there was considerable concern among the analysts about what the Chinese Communist reaction would be. Here was General MacArthur, enormously successful, not only in World War II but in this whole Inchon landing-a really, genuinely fantastic military maneuver. He was calling the shots. It was the White House and a small group outside the State Department, dealing with an essentially military, rather than a political problem. I don't know. I've read that there were analysts in the State Department who cautioned against a move to the Yalu River. The Chinese Communists now point to messages from Zhou En-lai through Indian Ambassador Pannikkar, saying, "Don't do it. We warn you not to go back across the 38th parallel." However, I don't see that that was feasible. Why should we stop there and let the North Koreans off?

Q: Yes. It just couldn't have been done. Also, the Indians were extremely suspect in those days.

HUMMEL: Oh, yes, they were. Their motives were very complex.

Q: If I recall the Ambassador you're talking about, he was next to Krishna Menon. He was of that ilk.

HUMMEL: He was a slippery character.

Q: Then you went where? To Hong Kong after this?

HUMMEL: The next thing was that I met my wife in the State Department.

Q: What was she doing?

HUMMEL: She was in an exactly analogous position in NEA [Bureau of Near East and African Affairs, its name at the time]. She'd graduated from SAIS [School of Advanced International Studies at John Hopkins University], had gone out to Turkey, and had taught in a college there for three years. She then came back to Washington and was hired by NEA. So we were working on a joint, anti-communist cartoon film called "When the Communists Came". I shudder now to think of it.

Q: Have you ever seen it?

HUMMEL: I did see it once but I never want to see it again. It was so amateurish. Anyway, she and I would go up to New York for policy sessions with other people who were doing this animated cartoon. Anyway, we were married in 1951 and sailed off to Hong Kong in 1952.

Q: When did you go to Hong Kong?

HUMMEL: In the fall of 1952.

Q: My real question on this was that when the Eisenhower administration entered office on January 20, 1953, was there any appreciable change that you felt at your level? Was anybody going around, calling your colleagues "the people who lost China?"

HUMMEL: No, I didn't see anything like that within the government. There wasn't any big difference. I can't recall any.

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Q: Today is June 16, 1994. This is a continuation of our interview with Ambassador Hummel. Mr. Ambassador, we left it when you had been in Far Eastern Affairs in the State Department. You had met and married your wife. This was all back in 1950-1952. Then you served in the American Consulate General in Hong Kong from 1952 to 1955. Could you describe what the situation was in [Mainland] China at that time? I assume that this was your major preoccupation, even though you were in Hong Kong.

HUMMEL: Well, the main event, of course, was that the Korean War was still on. There was an enormous sense of uncertainty in Hong Kong. We were at loggerheads with the British businessmen there, who were still shipping things into Communist China that we didn't want shipped in. We had a very large Economic Section in the Consulate General, tracking down sometimes very stupid things. I remember that I saw an Airgram, a kind of report that we used in those days, saying that American condoms should not be exported to Hong Kong because Chinese Communist troops could use them to cover the muzzles of their rifles when it rained.

Q: [Laughter]. Of course, it's true. I was in South Korea at the time. This was standard operating procedure for my [M-1] carbine. But anyway.

HUMMEL: It did seem a little extreme. I guess I'm describing a state of great uncertainty because nobody knew whether the Chinese Communists were going to march in and take Hong Kong, which they could have done at any time if they had really wanted to.

Q: What was the situation? The British, of course, had troops on the ground in Korea. It wasn't just a "token force." There were major British naval and air units in Korea, too. How was this situation reflected in the Hong Kong environment?

HUMMEL: Aside from this great sense of uncertainty-more among the British than among the Chinese population-there wasn't much of a reflection. There was a very hostile confrontation along the Hong Kong-China border. However, this had been going on for quite some time, anyway. After all, the Korean War began in the middle of 1950, and the Chinese Communists crossed the Yalu River [into Korea] in late 1950. So both sides had sort of gotten used to a sense of confrontation. It doesn't seem to me now that there were overt signs of hostility, except that we were all warned, when we went up to look at the border, to stay well back from it and out of range of Chinese Communist binoculars. The British were very careful not to be provocative. However, aside from that, along the border and despite the differing British and American attitudes toward exports to Mainland China, there was one other aspect of this situation. A lot of British people left Hong Kong. Where you previously had British clerks in British shops like Lane Crawford and in hotels and so forth, they had left because of the uncertainty. There were very few of them. Their places were taken by Chinese.

Q: Was there a feeling that the Chinese in Hong Kong were a potential "fifth column" at that time? Was everybody getting suspicious, or was it more generally accepted that these people really didn't want to have anything to do with Mainland China? Or did we have mixed feelings in this sense?

HUMMEL: I think that most people felt that the Chinese in Hong Kong were there because they didn't want to be under communist domination. While, no doubt, the British Special Branch had plenty of work to do, a large amount of that work was centered on making sure that the Chinese Nationalists-people controlled by Taiwan-were not being "provocative" to the PRC in an unacceptable way.

Q: You mean that they the Chinese Nationalists were trying to stir things up.

HUMMEL: Yes, trying to stir things up.

Q: Around that time, in Burma and, I guess, Malaysia, too...

HUMMEL: No, that was later, at the time of the "Cultural Revolution".

Q: But weren't there Chinese groups in Burma, Chinese [Nationalist] groups sort of "keeping the flame alive," at least to some extent.

HUMMEL: Yes, that's right. And a bit later on we were supporting very active Tibetan guerrillas in Tibet, as well as Chinese Nationalists in the Shan states of Burma.

Q: One more point. How was our Consulate General in Hong Kong set up at that time? Who was the Consul General? What were the activities of the Consulate General?

HUMMEL: Julian Harrington was the Consul General. He had had no experience in the Far East. I guess that he was pretty good at organizing the Consulate General. When I first went to Hong Kong, my job was to be a so-called "Evaluation Officer," doing public opinion surveys of Hong Kong for USIS among the Chinese population of Hong Kong, as far as we could do them. The PAO [Public Affairs Officer] left Hong Kong shortly after my arrival, and I was promoted to that job. It was a wonderful opportunity for me because I was responsible for producing Chinese language materials for overseas Chinese all over Southeast Asia-and Taiwan as well. Hong Kong was a very lively place to produce these materials. For that purpose I got to travel all around Southeast Asia.

Q: What type of publications were we putting out?

HUMMEL: Aside from simple-minded, straight anti-communist stuff, I think that our greatest coup was to invent a magazine called "World Today," which was published in Chinese. It turned out not to require any subsidy at all because we were able to sell it on the newsstands. It was extremely popular and circulated all over the region. This was invented while I was in charge of USIS there. It wasn't exactly my idea. The local staff and my American subordinates came up with the idea. It was printed on good paper and had good color printing. It contained topical stories. I remember that when Clark Gable came to Hong Kong to play in a movie called "Soldier of Fortune," we introduced him to the leading Chinese starlet, whose name was Li Li-hua. We had the two of them on the cover of the magazine, "schmoozing" a little bit on a boat in Hong Kong harbor. That edition sold out immediately, and we had to reprint quite a few copies.

Q: Where did you get your materials for this publication?

HUMMEL: There was a fair amount of anti-communist content. We were trying to report on adverse events in China, to a certain extent. However, we didn't fill the magazine with stories of that sort. We had articles of general interest-almost anything that you could imagine that a Chinese audience would be interested in.

Q: Did you have to pay for these articles or were you able to get things, virtually as publicly available...

HUMMEL: We had some pretty good writers on the staff of our Consulate General, one of whom was to become extremely famous as the head of one of the largest motion picture studios in Hong Kong and a multi-millionaire. We had a lot of talented people on our staff, but we also paid for articles written by people outside the Consulate General.

Q: Did you get micro-management from USIA in Washington?

HUMMEL: No, we didn't. We were very lucky that way. We had a great deal of freedom to decide what should go into the magazine. Editorial material was labeled as such. It generally came from Washington. The printing was done at a very large printing plant in the Philippines owned by USIS.

Q: This was all in Chinese?

HUMMEL: All of it.

Q: Perhaps I'm showing my ignorance, but Chinese writing for publication is basically the same everywhere.

HUMMEL: That's right. Written Chinese is basically the same. There are a few, little "quirks" about some of the dialects. However, although the "pictographs" are pronounced in wildly different ways in the different dialects, the writing system is intelligible to all Chinese speakers.

Q: As you were distributing [this magazine and other material], what about areas such as Indonesia, which has a large Chinese community which was not looked upon with favor by the Indonesian [authorities]. It was the same thing in the Philippines. Chinese "expatriates" have not been overly welcome guests in many places. Did you have to worry about the sensitivities of those countries in distributing your...

HUMMEL: No, not particularly. We and the materials we were subsidizing, including, by the way, a large number of books translated from English into Chinese, were all on the correct political side as far as these governments were concerned. The governments were basically anti-communist.

Q: As you produced these materials, you were also involved, I assume, with the "China watchers."

HUMMEL: Yes, indeed.

Q: What were you getting from our "China watchers?" Could you describe how they operated at that time and how effective they were in terms of their point of view?

HUMMEL: Well, there was an active corps of non-government people who were journalists, "China watchers," scholars, as well as staff members of the Consulate General. Obviously, the Political Section of the Consulate General was very interested in anything that was going on in Mainland China. Word of a new refugee who had come out of Communist China who was a particularly good source would spread quickly through this community. People would go and interview him or her and try to find out what they knew about the particular conditions in the area from which they came and, hopefully, conditions in Beijing. A very large amount of this material was published in a Consulate translation survey which is still a standard source for the Chinese Communist era. This was translated by the Consulate General and distributed to virtually anybody who wanted it Survey of the China Mainland Press.

Q: Did you have a "joint" translation service there with the British?

HUMMEL: No. We did this ourselves.

Q: Did you find that the British were doing anything comparable, or were they "playing a different game?"

HUMMEL: They did a very selected and small number of translations, which they distributed on a very careful basis, internally within the Hong Kong government and not for general use. The British were content to let the Americans be the "bad guys," as far as the Chinese Communists were concerned. The British themselves did not distribute anti-communist materials, which could have added to the trouble that the British already had themselves with Communist China.

Q: The British had an Embassy in Beijing, didn't they?

HUMMEL: Yes.

Q: From your vantage point, was anything coming out of the British Embassy, or were they living in a sort of isolated, non-productive mode?

HUMMEL: No. The British in Beijing were isolated and were not looked on with great favor there. However, they had an opportunity to talk to people, move around the city and see what it was like, and pick up rumors. [The British Embassy staff] was a fairly active bunch. They had good people-as we did also. For me, at any rate, one of the bright spots was the way in which we, and the British, too, continued to produce Chinese language officers through our systems of language training. Even though the jobs available to them were few and the future was uncertain, we still kept a lively flow of people going through our Chinese language courses.

Q: Where were the British training their language officers?

HUMMEL: Mostly in Hong Kong. We trained ours in Washington and Taiwan.

Q: With your knowledge of Chinese, did this help you to "get out and around" more easily in Hong Kong? Were you able to talk to the refugees?

HUMMEL: Oh, yes. Most of the refugees fresh from Mainland China were from Guangdong Province and spoke only the Cantonese dialect, which most of us did not speak. However, the most useful refugees came from elsewhere in China. We could understand them. We all had contacts with them when they came out.

Q: Was there a Chinese Nationalist element in Hong Kong, or was there an independent, anti-communist community?

HUMMEL: The anti-communist element was pretty much co-opted by the Nationalist authorities in Taiwan. They were supported and paid by-even if they weren't full-time employees of-the Chinese Nationalist Government. They were closely tied into it.

Q: What was your impression of the Chinese Nationalist Government at that time?

HUMMEL: I made several trips to Taiwan, partly because the materials that we were producing were also being used in Taiwan. I wanted to know what the reaction was to them. I was quite impressed with the way in which the Nationalist Government had pulled up its socks and eliminated many, if not most, of the ills that had caused its downfall on the mainland.

Q: Corruption was one of the major ones.

HUMMEL: Corruption was one of them. There was also mistreatment of their own citizens on the mainland. When the Nationalist Chinese took over the areas which had been occupied by the Japanese, they quite often treated the local Chinese population as if they had all been collaborators with the Japanese. This led to a great deal of totally unnecessary friction. It drove a lot of Chinese people into the arms of the Chinese Communists on the mainland. And of course during the civil war the communists pretended to want an open society, in a "united front tactic" that lasted only until they came to power, after which they suppressed all the moderate political parties which had supported them.

In Taiwan there was a famous incident in 1947. Nobody knows to this day the number of people executed, but probably several thousand local Taiwanese people were shot by the Chinese Nationalists during a riot. That, of course, soured the atmosphere in Taiwan for a very long time.

They did a good many stupid things in the early years of their control of Taiwan. However, they had a very serious, self-examination within the Kuomintang Party to diagnose what had gone wrong. They did a pretty fair job of it. Among other things, they prohibited the rich Nationalists who had come over from the mainland from monopolizing the various industries. Moreover, they carried out a very effective land reform program, paying off Taiwanese landlords in negotiable bonds which had real value. These Taiwanese ex-landlords are today the richest people in Taiwan. By and large, they are much richer than the people who came over from the mainland in 1949. The Taiwanese handled land reform, which was urged by the US, and was the right thing to do, and they kept the Nationalists who moved from the mainland to Taiwan from monopolizing economic power, although political power was very carefully kept in the hands of the Kuomintang Party.

Q: Did you have any problems with the Nationalists on Taiwan, "looking over your shoulder" at your magazine or other publications?

HUMMEL: Occasionally, yes. Occasionally, I think that they felt that we weren't anti-communist enough. We were, of course, catering to a somewhat different audience than they were. We were trying to sell a magazine on the newsstands, and publishing translations of American books that we hoped would sell, and producing a daily news file. Some of the Nationalists would have preferred straight out anti-communist propaganda, calling everybody on the mainland a "Communist bandit," which was the cliché they used.

Q: During the time you were in Hong Kong, you remained the Public Affairs Officer?

HUMMEL: Yes. We handled a lot of exchanges of persons. We kept the Fulbright program going. We had two libraries-one on each side of the harbor on Hong Kong and Kowloon sides-and we were very active with events, such as lectures and the kinds of things that revolve around libraries, which USIS does pretty well, wherever it operates.

Q: With the exchange students, did you find that they were coming back [to Hong Kong]?

HUMMEL: No. Most of them did not. There was not much incentive for that.

Q: Did the Chinese in Hong Kong-or maybe this is an over generalization-feel quite different from the people in Taiwan? Was there much affinity there?

HUMMEL: I wouldn't say that there was friction, but they were completely different groups and operated socially in different circles. Quite a few of the very rich people from Shanghai managed to get their money out of the mainland-or at least part of it-and quite often became the entrepreneurs in Hong Kong. That caused a certain amount of friction with the local Cantonese entrepreneurs. Many of the Shanghai Chinese started to play the gold market, which was really more of a gambling game than anything else-like the commodities market gambling that we have. At first the Hong Kong sharpies among the local Chinese managed to strip the fortunes of several of the Shanghai newcomers, who had thought that they were smarter than any of these local people. Actually, the Hong Kong people would rig the market deliberately to sucker some individual investor in Hong Kong, and then deliberately pull the rug out from under him by selling instead of buying at some crucial time.

However, I think it is fair to say that production activity in Hong Kong remained in the hands of the refugees who had come to Hong Kong. This was true, for example, of the whole textile industry, which had been transplanted from Shanghai. Previously, there was very little manufacturing going on in Hong Kong. However, entrepreneurial Shanghai investors and other people from elsewhere on the mainland brought with them the skills and the desire to engage in manufacturing. That is when manufacturing activity really started in Hong Kong.

Q: Did the end of the Korean War in 1953 make any difference at all?

HUMMEL: Yes, it did. The end of that war calmed everybody down. British investors and traders began to come back to Hong Kong. The tension and sense of impermanence virtually disappeared. At that time, too, the British Government decided that it was worthwhile to put a lot more money into social services in Hong Kong. The obvious manifestation of this was public housing, which you see everywhere now.

Q: [You mean] those huge apartment blocks.

HUMMEL: Huge blocks of multi-story, very cheap, highly subsidized housing. We who were there at the time thought that this was a bit late, because for several years the refugees-or squatters-had been living in makeshift, almost cardboard shacks on the hills. These places would burn down periodically, and a lot of people would be killed. There were no sanitary services of any sort provided to them. However, as soon as the Korean War began to wind down, the British began to do a very good job of putting up public housing and getting the refugees out of these squatter slums and in education and health.

Q: What was your impression of British rule in Hong Kong? Was it still colonial type rule or were most things turned over to the Chinese?

HUMMEL: It was very much a colonial type rule and very much under British control. Since we were involved in educational activities in USIS, we kept a particular eye on the University of Hong Kong. For far too many years this university refused to allow the establishment of any kind of official, Chinese language university. They wanted to be the Oxford or Cambridge of Hong Kong and uphold the standards of the old country in a way that just was not possible and was not appropriate for a situation like Hong Kong, where the thirst for knowledge was enormous. The knowledge of the English language was meager. One could not and should not try to maintain such an elitist monopoly for so long.

However, gradually, Chinese universities started up anyway. They were unauthorized at first, but slowly and reluctantly the British authorized them.

Q: Just one further question. USIS was under the State Department at that time?

HUMMEL: Well, let's see. No. It was split off in 1953, about a year after I arrived there.

Q: Did you feel the heavy hand of Walter Robertson, the Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs? He was a very ardent anti-communist and pro Chiang Kai-shek. Did you feel his hand at all in what you were doing?

HUMMEL: No, not really, not in Hong Kong. I mentioned earlier that, when I was in Beijing right after the war ended, Robertson asked me to breakfast to get my views about what was going to happen. I said that I thought that the Chinese Communists were going to win, and he practically threw me out of the breakfast room. That was my only contact with him and the only time I directly felt his influence.

Q: You left Hong Kong in 1955? Did you go straight to Japan or did you...

HUMMEL: Well, we had home leave. Not incidentally, we followed the lead of some good friends of ours, one of the "New York Times" China watchers, Liebermann, and went to Germany and adopted two small German kids, on our way home. That, of course, changed our lives considerably. One of them was nine months old, and the other was almost two years old. This was in 1955.

Then, after home leave, we went to Japan, where I was, theoretically, demoted to be Deputy Public Affairs Officer in the Embassy in Tokyo.

Q: Considering the relative size of USIS in Hong Kong and Tokyo, [this was a promotion]. According to my record, you were in Tokyo from 1955 to 1957.

HUMMEL: Yes.

Q: What was the situation in Japan during this period?

HUMMEL: Well, let's see. Americans were extremely popular, strangely enough. The information centers previously run by the American military-like the "Amerika Haus" installations we had in Germany-had been started up all over Japan. I think that there were 13 of them. These centers were extremely popular with the Japanese, partly because they were one of the few cultural activities left in a rather devastated country. To these centers we would bring all kinds of events, not just books.

We had a somewhat disastrous visit by William Faulkner, who was drunk all the time and very hard to get up onto the stage. We had to sober him up enough to get him onto the stage. However, he made a big impression.

Other, famous American writers would come, and we would run them through this circuit-as many American information centers as they could stand.

Q: At that time Japan was very much on the "front burner" of American interests. Many people had been part of the occupying Army or had served in Japan. There were movies involving Japanese women and American men-all in a favorable light about this exotic country and how it was a quaint, interesting, and nice place to be. This must have been very useful for you.

HUMMEL: Yes, it was. It's ironic to remember that the first, post-war Japanese automobiles were being manufactured at that time, and they were terrible. They had no synchro-mesh gears, the bearings would burn out quickly, and nobody wanted them. Everyone wanted to have an American car which were being sold off by departing American diplomats and military. Now, 30 years later, everybody wants Japanese cars!

Q: Was there any discussion or concern about the future of these information centers? What were they called?

HUMMEL: They were called information centers.

Q: Was there any concern about [these centers] "hurting" the culture of Japan or about the impact of American culture on Japan?

HUMMEL: I don't think so, because the impact was mostly literary. There was some pop music available on records and so on, but that didn't seem to bother the Japanese. Beside that, pop music hadn't become so extremely pop. They didn't have the rap music of today. I remember quite a bit of discussion in Japan about Western movies. They were very "un-Japanese." For example, the hero of "Shane" rode in out of nowhere-no family background and no status of any kind. He intervened in the affairs of the village and then disappeared into the sunset. There are samurai stories like this, but it made the Japanese very uncomfortable to see these people without any status solving problems and being heroes. This was the view of a certain segment of Japanese society.

Q: This film came out before the movie, "The Seven Samurai," which is really somewhat like that. In fact, it was turned into an American western film. Well, who was the Public Affairs Officer at that time?

HUMMEL: He was Joe Evans. He came from a newspaper background. I was sent there to be his deputy because I was part of the USIS system and knew how to run an operation of this kind and deal with Washington HQ. Joe was a perfectly good officer but he needed an insider deputy like myself.

Q: Were you producing magazines?

HUMMEL: Yes, and movies also, plus book translations, and news items as fast as we could turn them out. The events which took place at all of the information centers throughout Japan were a very large part of our effort. They also cost a lot of money. We had a not so amusing confrontation over an exhibit called, "The Family of Man," by Edward Steichen. It consisted of a large number of photographs.

Q: It was promoted all over the world.

HUMMEL: In the background of this exhibit in Japan was a controversy which kept bubbling away about attitudes toward the atomic bomb attack on Hiroshima. There was a group in Japan that wanted, for understandable reasons, to publicize the awful things that we had done in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The Steichen exhibit was to be put on, as was normal at that time, on the top floor of a very large department store in the Ginza area of downtown Tokyo. We had a contract that said that the exhibit would be exactly the same as the one which had been going on around the world, elsewhere. However, unknown to us, Steichen had given the Japanese permission to add some local photographs, if they wished-up to 10 or 12. Lo and behold, practically the night before the exhibit was to open-and, of all things, the Emperor himself was to visit the exhibit-six or eight horror photos of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were added to this Steichen exhibit.

We could not open such an exhibit. There were lots of telegrams and telephone calls back and forth to Steichen, who finally admitted that he had given the Japanese permission to do this, in spite of his contract with us that he would not do so. The compromise was that nobody, not even the Japanese, wanted to have the Emperor exposed in this way to unpleasant things-at least, most of the Japanese except the activists did not want this. Nor could the US Government easily connive at such an exhibit. So our compromise, finally and painfully negotiated at the very highest level, with Ambassador John Allison involved, to his considerable annoyance, was that we put a black cloth over that segment which had been added, so that it was not visible when the Emperor went through the exhibit. Then, after the official opening, we took the black cloth off the photographs so that the Japanese public could see these awful pictures of the ruins of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, with the scarred bodies and that kind of thing.

Q: Did you find any particular contrast between dealing with the British and the Chinese [in Hong Kong], and then getting involved with Japan? Did you see a difference in attitude?

HUMMEL: Oh, yes. I would like to think that that was one of the joys of the Foreign Service. As you move from place to place, you have to learn new things, new cultures, and new information. I thought then and still think that this aspect is just terrific. It kept you intellectually alive and flexible.

Q: Can you recall any things involved in learning the Japanese viewpoint? In the first place, in view of your background. You had been a prisoner of the Japanese. Did this play any part in how you felt?

HUMMEL: I remember having a generic, near hatred of the Japanese for two or three years after the war ended. However, that sort of wore off as I went to graduate school, finished off my education, and returned to China. Then I went to Japan, which of course I had visited before during transits. I don't recall feeling that way about the Japanese after I was stationed there.

The most interesting thing I did was, first of all, to learn some of the Japanese language. I learned a great deal of "practical" Japanese. For one thing, I could read the "kanji" characters from my knowledge of Chinese. That helped in learning the language. I liked to travel by myself, visiting all of the cultural centers, all over Japan, staying in Japanese inns, and traveling on trains. I like to feel that I was learning how the Japanese thought and how they acted.

Later on, my next post was in Burma, and I felt exactly the same way about the Burmese. I also learned a lot of the Burmese language.

Q: Can you give any examples that occurred to you at the time about differences in attitude between the Chinese, whom you were used to, both in mainland China and in Hong Kong, and the Japanese?

HUMMEL: I don't know. I have a lot of trouble with questions like that.

Q: It's a hard question. I'm not sure that there's an answer.

HUMMEL: I have a kind of holistic view of these people, and I really don't relate very much to questions such as, How do Japanese people differ from Americans? I really don't quite know how to answer that.

Q: Did you find in your production...

HUMMEL: Their political and social systems and their political organization is something else. Everybody knows that the Japanese are sharply constrained by social customs, collective minded and consensus minded, in a way that the Chinese, certainly, are not-and Americans are not.

Q: What about on the production side? Did you have any particular problems? Are the Japanese easy to work with?

HUMMEL: You had to be aware of certain sensitivities on the part of the Japanese. That is, the way you treat individuals is quite different. You just watch how other people treated other people-and then do the same. I didn't feel that this was a big barrier, except for some unfeeling and unperceptive Americans, who never quite got used to this. They liked to shout orders that they could have shouted to an American without any offense. However, the Japanese, the Burmese, or the Chinese would take great offense at this kind of behavior.

Q: Were the Americans who still were there in great numbers a problem?

HUMMEL: No. They had all returned to barracks. They were not very visible-except around the main buildings, where they were the remnants of the Occupation. Even then, we were quickly turning over control. We didn't have American soldiers out directing traffic, for instance, on the streets of Tokyo, or anywhere else. We quickly got them out of that business.

Q: Was Okinawa a problem?

HUMMEL: Yes, it was. However, it was mostly a problem of land tenure. We had too many golf courses there, for one thing. Too many, unneeded golf courses. However, we solved that some time in the 1960's, with the reversion of Okinawa. This was a big, big event in American-Japanese relations.

Q: I had a call from a Japanese TV station just a few weeks ago. They wanted to talk to some people and get some ideas about the Okinawa reversion period. I said, "Well, don't think about this as a Japanese-American issue. Think of this as a Department of State and Department of Defense conflict."

HUMMEL: Very true, yes.

Q: In fact, there's an ad in the paper today, in the "Washington Post." This referred to the time in 1994, when Okinawans were complaining that we had too many military firing ranges there, and all that.

HUMMEL: We also have some very crucial reserve forces stationed there, and they have to have room to maneuver.

Q: Now we're going through a very difficult time about North Korea.

HUMMEL: Yes.

Q: What was your impression of the Japanese specialists in our Embassy? Did you have any feeling that they were different from the Chinese specialists you had been used to elsewhere? Did they have different attitudes?

HUMMEL: In one sense I was not part of that group of Japanese specialists. I never felt that I knew the Japanese as well as I thought that our Japan specialists did. In another sense-well, I guess it's the same thing. I felt that the Japanese specialists were on very solid grounds in their judgments. I respected their judgments about the Japanese. I didn't have views of my own that I was confident enough about to want to dispute with them. We had a very good corps of people who embedded themselves, at least partially, in Japanese culture. I think that, by and large, they knew the difference between Japanese and American interests and were not particularly affected by localitis.

Q: How about John Allison as an Ambassador? Did you have much to do with him? Do you have any views on how he operated?

HUMMEL: I had quite a bit to do with him. I remember that one night we had a reception at his residence. I can't remember for what. Afterwards, there was a group of about 10 of us, including the Ambassador, and the Ambassador's girl friend, who should best be nameless. This happened while Mrs. Allison was away, partly because of the girl friend. I was also there. Three of the 10 of us were from the Embassy, and there were about six newspapermen. We went to a restaurant and boozed it up. I felt that I had to stay there partially to protect the Ambassador.

Q: This was your role as a Public Affairs Officer, which is partly to be the spokesman or the chief "flack" for the Ambassador.

HUMMEL: I remember a guy you may have known-many people knew him. A great fellow, Robert, or "Pepper" Martin. He was sitting next to the Ambassador's girl friend. The girl friend had an "off the shoulder" gown. Pepper had his big, meaty hand on her shoulder. He leaned across the girl friend and he said to Allison, "John, why the f___ do you hate the press?" That started quite a free for all. I'll never forget that remark. I take credit for extracting the Ambassador from this situation. I got him into his car and sent him home. There was less damage done than might have been.

Q: He was a Japanese "hand," wasn't he?

HUMMEL: Yes.

Q: How would you say that he ran the Embassy?

HUMMEL: He ran a pretty good show. On the one hand he was a Japan specialist, although I must say that he didn't exhibit-at least to me-the kind of sensitivity to the special requirements of the Japanese that many of the younger Japan specialists did. I just didn't see this aspect in him-maybe he had it. On the other hand he was a fairly doctrinaire Foreign Service Officer who wanted things done in the old fashioned way-not a martinet, necessarily, but...

Q: How did Allison get on with the Japanese Government? Do you have any "feel" for that?

HUMMEL: He got along quite well. In the traditional way, the Japanese liked him. He was reliable, except for the girl friend.

Q: Was she Japanese?

HUMMEL: No, American.

Q: Going back to that time, how did we view the Soviets? I think that, as the whole Soviet episode fades from view, I'd like to nail down how we felt. How did we feel about the Soviets in the Far East at that time?

HUMMEL: We certainly viewed them as adversaries. Most of the Japanese, too, shared a very strong suspicion that the communists would like to subvert their government. There was an active Communist Party of Japan, as well as an active Socialist Party, some of whose members were fairly closely allied with the communists. There was a certain number of dirty tricks going on, on both sides. It was, I would say, a tense relationship. The Japanese Government, and most people, didn't like the Japanese communists at all. The Japanese Government had the same kind of suspicions of the CPJ which the American Government had, although the ruling Liberal Democratic Party was able quite easily to manage its relations with the minority parties at that time. The Japanese Government didn't feel threatened by the communists in a bureaucratic or governmental way. However, the Japanese Police, I'm sure, spent as much time keeping track of communists of all sorts as they did with criminals.

Q: At that time, how did we view the students, who were an important factor? Was this when the "Zengakuren" was active?

HUMMEL: Yes, it was. The students were gaining influence, but they were regarded in the same way that students are viewed in any other society. They were considered by most people a little too extreme, disrupting university life with strikes and making alliances with the workers, who had their own agenda of social upheaval and wage claims. The students had also been infiltrated, to some extent, by the communists. The students took advantage of the traditional ways in which...

Q: Were you able to "point" programs toward the students and try to reach them or did you more or less "write them off," feeling that they would outgrow these activities, and a new crop would come up?

HUMMEL: We did point programs toward the students, not so much in terms of written materials as motion pictures and material we would get into local TV and local newspapers. These were not exactly directed toward the students but were aimed at some of their misconceptions, anyway-misconceptions about the United States. However, I don't think that we considered them a priority target, partly because they were such a tough target.

Q: Also endemic to that kind of situation is that people go through a student stage. Then they leave the student stage and become part of the system.

HUMMEL: That's right.

Q: It's true in Korea and other places, but they can be, of course, an important element in times of crisis.

HUMMEL: As the press arm of the Embassy, we put out press releases and also wrote materials that were reprinted in Japanese publications, to correct gross distortions of what actually had happened in connection with some event involving the U. S. military.

Q: In the Japanese university system was there a heavy, Marxist- oriented faculty, as is true in some of our universities in the United States?

HUMMEL: No, I don't think that the faculty was heavily Marxist-oriented, because it was part of the establishment and was tightly controlled. However, there were enough young people hanging around the universities to be quite a disruptive element. They would attack the faculty, verbally, and they generally figured out many ways to make trouble for the establishment.

Q: Did any of the problems surface that were to come up later on in the United States? I'm particularly thinking of the problems of racism in particular. I think that we're talking about the time when the segregation of our schools was coming to an end.

HUMMEL: These events were pretty high on the list of events that the Japanese press and media publicized. At the same time the Japanese, frankly, are so racist themselves, in their own way, that I never thought that this was very much of a central theme-except as it diminished the stature of Americans in general. I think this was really the purpose of their publicizing these things.

Q: How did you find dealing with the Japanese media on those subjects?

HUMMEL: The Japanese media was highly competitive. There was a great deal of money invested in it. Newspaper editors and owners made piles of money from advertisements and subscriptions. It's a strange world there. Even then, the Japanese media were hiring helicopters to take aerial photos of fires, disasters, and so on. They were very sophisticated in their coverage. Quite often there would be TV and radio stations connected with the newspapers. They were very professional. We would be able to get our materials reprinted in many of these elements of the media-reprinted and used in many of these outfits.

Q: You left Japan in 1957, is that right?

HUMMEL: Right.

Q: You went from a highly sophisticated society-I'm not sure that's the right term-but a highly organized society to quite a different place. You went to Burma, where we have you serving from 1957 to 1960, as Public Affairs Officer. How did that assignment come about?

HUMMEL: I'm really not too sure. I had visited Burma a couple of times, during the time I served in Hong Kong. The position came open, and it was about time for me to leave Japan. So it worked out that way. I became really very much charmed by the whole society and the Burmese people. They are one of the few people that really act out their religion, in a very nice and gentle way. They were perfectly willing to go hunting with me, and I went on marvelous hunting trips there, but some of them felt that killing animals is something that you atone for later, by building a pagoda, or something like that. Meanwhile, nobody's perfect.

Q: What was the political and economic situation in this 1957-1960 period?

HUMMEL: It was quite fascinating. The umbrella party that had brought about independence called the AFPFL, Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League had begun to split, along personality lines. Midway during this tour of duty in Burma, somewhere around 1958, there really was danger of a civil war. On the one hand the country was extraordinarily peaceful. Right after independence was achieved in 1948, a wave of insurgencies sprang up all over the country, along ethnic and political lines. At one time the central government was virtually confined to the city of Rangoon and was under siege.

By the time I arrived, all of that had disappeared. It was a marvelous time for traveling and driving around the country. I drove my own jeep up to places where you can't go any more-Bhamo, Lashio, Myitkyina, and many other exotic places. The ethnic insurgencies had all subsided.

However, in spite of that fact, the internal politics of the country in Rangoon had reached near fever pitch, to the point where it was agreed that they would ask the Minister of Defense, Gen. Ne Win, to take over for a limited period of time and then have elections. Strangely enough, he did actually hold fairly early elections. U Nu, the former Prime Minister, won them and took power back again for about three years. I left in 1960. After I left, Gen. Ne Win seized power again in 1962 and set up his totally stupid, socialist economic system.

During the time I was there 1957-1960 there was a kind of interregnum. There was great tension and danger of civil war. Everybody heaved a sigh of relief when a savior, Gen. Ne Win, took charge of the government for about a year. Elections were held, and things calmed down again.

This was the first, and, I guess, the only split in the governing coalition. Ne Win then took over the government permanently in 1962.

Q: What were American interests, as we saw them, in Burma in this period?

HUMMEL: Very, very slender. By the time I arrived in Burma, our feeble efforts to make trouble for the Chinese Communists in Yunnan Province by supporting remnant, Kuomintang troops had all subsided.

Q: Was this the "Red Flag," "White Flag" conflict?

HUMMEL: No, red and white flags were factions within the Communist Party of Burma. By agreement the pro-Nationalist troops were mostly airlifted out of Burma and sent off to Taiwan, although there were quite a few remnants left in Burma, who promptly went into the opium business to support themselves. However, in the beginning the communist factions were rather a trivial factor-at least by the time I was there. We in USIS had to be very careful, because the Burmese Government had an intimate relationship with the Chinese Communists. We had to be careful not to be overly anti-communist in the materials we used or the books we had in the libraries. We had three USIS libraries there: in Rangoon, Mandalay, and Moulmein, the latter place down on the South coast. All of them were lovely, rather primitive towns. All of the libraries were extremely active information centers. For a time we even had a Consulate up in Mandalay, too, as well as an information center. All of these are gone now, of course, with the political changes in Burma and the U. S. budget squeeze.

The Burmese people are just extraordinarily nice. They are welcoming and delighted when you learn to speak a bit of the language. I was studying Burmese very seriously. By the time I left Burma in 1960, I could read the newspapers, though still very slowly, using a good dictionary.

Q: Where does the Burmese language fall? Is it a mixture of Chinese and Malay?

HUMMEL: It's part of the Sino-Tibetan family of languages. It's monosyllabic and tonal, so it's something like Chinese, although, strangely enough, there are very, very few cognate words that are related in both Chinese and Burmese. Anyway, the structure and even the tone system is very much like what I was accustomed to in Chinese.

Q: During your time there, was our Ambassador Walter McConaughy?

HUMMEL: When I first came to Rangoon, the Ambassador was William P. Snow, who was from out of the area. He was a Latin American person. As far as I was concerned, he was rather a nonentity. Ambassador Walter McConaughy, who succeeded him, was a Far Easterner, with extensive experience in China, although he couldn't speak Chinese.

Q: He was a man with considerable knowledge of the area, was he not? He also had a reputation of being a hard line anti-communist.

HUMMEL: Yes.

Q: How did that work out in this peaceful country of Burma? Was he a little out of his element because of that, would you say?

HUMMEL: No, I wouldn't say that. He was intelligent enough to be quite aware of Burmese sensitivities-how far to go and where to stop. We had at least two exciting incidents during my time there.

One was when a young official from the Soviet Embassy jumped the wall and came over to the American Embassy. He said that he wanted asylum. We had an exciting time over that because the Soviets, of course, demanded him back, claiming that he was a criminal and a thief. The Burmese Government really didn't want any part of this. However, we worked out a compromise so that he spent about a half hour alone with a couple of Soviet officers at the airport-to satisfy the Soviets that he was not being kidnapped. Then we put him on an American plane and whisked him out of the country. He subsequently wrote a book about his experiences in the Soviet Embassy, which was quite interesting and a devastating description of Soviet Embassy life.

Q: This was a description of his time in the Soviet Embassy. I recall that this was a standard reference about how the Soviets maintained control over their people.

HUMMEL: His name was Kaznachayev. The second incident was when a man from the Chinese Communist Embassy staggered into the home of our Air Attaché, which was close to the Chinese Communist Embassy, with a stab wound in his stomach-inflicted by the brother of his Sino-Burmese girl friend. I sat up with him all night because I spoke Chinese. Eventually, it turned out that he was vomiting blood, so he had to go to the hospital. While in the hospital, he was turned back to the Chinese Communists, and nobody ever heard of him again. These are incidents that stick out in my mind, although they are rather trivial in terms of American-Burmese relations. I would say that Burmese-American relations were quite good and improved, as time went on.

Marian Anderson came to Burma and sang and was an absolute, smash hit.

Q: She was a black woman and a well-known contralto.

HUMMEL: We even had a small version of an American ballet company which came to Rangoon. This was very successful.

We in USIS had many active programs, including book translations, as usual. The newspapers used a lot of our materials, and the cultural centers and libraries were very popular and effective.

Q: How were the Burmese newspapers at that period of time? Were they independent?

HUMMEL: Yes, pretty independent. They reflected different factions of the AFPFL party. I don't recall that there were any overtly communist newspapers. There were a few prominent, socialist writers whom I made a particular point of getting to know. They were very interesting and lively people. Some were quite close to being communists, although they all claimed to be socialists. There was a surprisingly lively intellectual life and a lot of cultural interchanges with foreign countries, especially Britain. There was a fairly good university. All in all, I found it a very pleasant place to be.

Q: What was your impression of the Burmese Government-either under Ne Win or U Nu? How did you and the Embassy, as far as you could see, evaluate these people at that time?

HUMMEL: I never felt, honestly, that either U Nu, Ne Win, or any of the other claimants to political power-U Ba Swe or U Kyaw Nyein, who were involved in a split within the AFPFL in 1958, had much in the way of intellectual smarts. They reflected their own society, but none of them was very well educated in Western terms. I'm not sure that any of them had a university education. There were people around who had good university educations from Britain. Their Chief Justice is still alive. He was a close friend of ours. He would now be 98, or something like that. He had had a thoroughly Oxonian education and was an excellent Chief Justice. There were people around who had good educations, but they weren't politicians. I wouldn't say that I was contemptuous of the politicians but I think that I had the same attitude as the Burmese had about them, that they were individuals looking after themselves, somewhat corrupt, flawed people, the way many of ours are, and no real high quality among them.

Q: What did you think of the intentions of Communist China toward Burma at that time?

HUMMEL: Communist China's intentions toward Burma at that time were very dubious. I had questions as to what their intentions were. The Burmese Government was doing a pretty good job of eradicating the communist guerrillas. It had wiped out the "White Flag" wing of the Communist Party and had cornered the "Red Flag" wing in the central mountains of Burma, between a couple of river valleys. It had them pretty much under control. Burma managed to sign a very sensible border agreement with Communist China, which is still in effect, the Chinese Communists swapped some territory with Burma, on the basis of, "You give me that village, and I'll give you this village." Burma's outward relations with the Chinese Communists were quite good. The Burmese Government was very careful to pay obeisance to Beijing, making trips to Beijing. However, during my time in Burma these contacts never took on any political or economic colorations.

It was only after Ne Win took over in 1962, after I had completed my first tour of duty in Burma, that the Burmese Government began that extraordinarily stupid policy of "letting the state run everything." An extreme form of left socialist and communist system of management which virtually destroyed the Burmese economy.

Q: I take it that drugs were not a problem during your first tour in Burma.

HUMMEL: Not at that time. Later on, when I was in Rangoon in my second incarnation, as Ambassador, I started to exert pressure on Ne Win to begin to crack down on opium growing.

Q: Was golf a major form of leisure activity for the leaders? I know that, later on, golf became a very important form of entree to Ne Win and company.

HUMMEL: I guess that golf was not as important then as it became later on. I've always regretted that I've never played golf. That would have been an ideal time to start playing, because a golf course was five minutes' drive from my house. My wife, Betty Lou, gave me a set of golf clubs, but I was too busy going on hunting trips.

Q: I think that we're near the end of this session. When you left Burma in 1960, what was your feeling about where the country was going? You were to come back as Ambassador at a later date. But at that point, where did you feel that Burma was going?

HUMMEL: I was disappointed that Burma wasn't doing better, politically, economically, and educationally. In those days, just shortly after the end of World War II, you could make a fairly valid comparison between Thailand and Burma. They had almost the same size population, almost the same area, and the same religion (Theravada Buddhism). However, the Thai were going ahead full speed economically, based on greed, corruption, and grease, to a certain extent. But the Burmese were content to be a backwater and didn't want anything like that. It wasn't just Ne Win who closed Burma off from the world. It was the general sense among the Burmese that they didn't want to have too much Westernization. As a result, I felt, even then, that they were not likely to do as well as I thought that they ought to do, either politically or economically.

One thing about Burmese society-and it's kind of attractive-is that the economy is quite flexible. That is, when things are good, the average person, who is a farmer, of course-and incidentally there still is more land than is being actively farmed-spends a lot of time and money on his religion, giving to the pagoda, the sangha (clergy), and lavish weddings and funerals. When things are bad, he just contracts his expenditures in those areas and still lives at about the same level. This is because of the ease of agricultural production and the very simple life that they lead. So I never thought that they were going to "crash"-and they haven't, in spite of the extraordinarily stupid economic policies which they have been following since 1962.

But I was sad that they weren't moving ahead into the modern world, as Thailand was. I would see a lot of Thailand, because my only access to Burma was through Thailand, through Bangkok. I had good friends in Bangkok and would stay with them. I was very much interested in Thailand as well. Those were my thoughts as I left Burma after my first tour there. I thought that the Burmese were lovely people but not destined to go very far. Nor did we have very important interests there.

Q: OK, we'll pick this up the next time and talk about the National War College in 1960-1961 and then your assignment to the VOA [Voice of America] in Washington.

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Q: All right, today is January 31, 1995.

HUMMEL: It happens to be Chinese New Year's Day.

Q: So Happy New Year. Which year is this?

HUMMEL: We're starting the "Year of the Pig."

Q: Is that a good or a bad year?

HUMMEL: It's always very complex-good points and bad points.

Q: I always take great pleasure in this. I was born in the year of the Dragon. My wife was born in the year of the Dog. According to all of the Chinese restaurant place mats, Dragons and Dogs are not supposed to get together. I'm supposed to avoid the Dog like the plague, and vice versa. We've been married for 40 years, so I don't know.

You were at the National War College in 1960-1961. What was the atmosphere then? We were sort of betwixt and between wars at that point. It was toward the end of the Eisenhower second term. But the elections took place in November, 1960. Did you get any feel about how the U. S. military felt about the world and where we were going?

HUMMEL: Well, first of all, you'd have to rate the services. Air Force officers, I think, were the most naive and unthinking. The Navy was next, and the Army was probably better educated and a little better balanced. To get to the bottom line, I was quite disappointed with the quality of the work that was being done at the National War College. As you know, we broke up into small groups of eight or 10 students to attack a particular problem. The faculty would give us a problem-made up, but conceivably real. The military guys on these committees would strongly advocate extraordinarily simplistic solutions, without regard to the limitations on American power. That was one criticism that I had. And these solutions also had no regard to international standards. Several of these committee solutions would start with simple actions like, "Assassinate De Gaulle," who was one of our betes noires at the time. That's an extreme example and, of course, did not occur often or get into the final draft.

Other countries have defense universities which produce extraordinarily high quality papers which their governments use. Look at the German General Staff, and that kind of thing. We were nowhere near that. Also, we lacked the practice of studying, or at least trying to understand, the domestic, American scene. That was nowhere in the curriculum. Everybody thought that we knew all about the United States. In fact, of course, we have prejudices, schisms, social and political problems and so forth...

Q: The American scene is the main focus of the State Department's Senior Seminar on Foreign Policy. I took that course and found it fascinating.

HUMMEL: I surmise that the Senior Seminar was focused that way partly because of the deficiencies in the National War College.

Q: Also, I think, there was the presumption, which, I think, is not bad, that Foreign Service people spend so much time abroad that they need to learn more about their own country. But the people who came to the Senior Seminar from the military were people who obviously were not bound "upward and onward." My impression was that they were nice people, but...

HUMMEL: Well, I don't know whether the National War College has changed or not. I hope that it has, but I rather tend to doubt it.

Q: In a couple of interviews that I've done with Foreign Service people who have gone to war colleges they have said that when they had "war games," it was usually the civilians who were more prone to toss nuclear weapons around than the military. Did you notice that? Maybe nuclear weapons "mess up" the battlefield too much.

HUMMEL: I don't know. I wouldn't say that that was true during my time at the National War College.

Q: You were with the Voice of America from 1961 to 1963, which is a fascinating time. A new administration, under President Kennedy, had just come into office. Could you talk about what you were doing and the atmosphere when you got there? I think that this was an exciting time.

HUMMEL: Let's see. Edward R. Murrow was the head of USIA and, in the final analysis, in charge of the Voice of America. The director of the Voice of America was Henry Loomis, a very dedicated and accomplished person. He had an engineering background but knew a great deal about the substance of broadcasting and was very aware of political nuances. I thought that the VOA was quite a good operation. We were negotiating furiously abroad for additional sites for transmitters, to reach into both the Soviet Union and Mainland China. I was sent out on several missions, and failed in every case: to negotiate with the Thai about a giant, megawatt medium wave transmitter which we would share time on. We would broadcast to China, and the Thai could broadcast wherever they wanted. They decided that they didn't want to become involved with that. The Chinese Communists would have considered it a hostile act, and the Thai didn't want to be seen by the Chinese Communists as hostile.

I negotiated with Archbishop Makarios in Cyprus, and the Cypriots likewise didn't want to be partners in a transmitter. We already had a fairly substantial station in Israel and, of course, large operations in Okinawa and the Philippines. We negotiated for a little more land in the Philippines and we got that.

I had a fascinating time in India. The Indians were very much interested. It took about six weeks to complete the negotiations. This was in the aftermath of the India-China War of 1962, and the Indians were very interested in being close to us. They also didn't care if they appeared to be hostile to Communist China in this kind of joint use of transmitters. I was the head of the negotiating team out there. Bill Weathersby was the PAO in India and an officer of the Embassy, too, of course. The visiting team consisted of myself, a lawyer, and an engineer. We would meet with various people from the Indian Government. Then we would recess for three to seven days, or something like that, while we waited for comments from our HQ. That left me free to travel around, to get on a plane or, sometimes, to travel on Ambassador Galbraith's plane. I would go over to Karachi and see friends over there in our Embassy to Pakistan. This was before Bangladesh split away. I got over to what was then East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, to Calcutta, and some other places. I found exploring India very interesting.

Q: Starting out with the Thai, what was your impression of their attitude when you went there? Did they make clear that they weren't going to do anything-or did this point appear obliquely?

HUMMEL: I guess it was both. In typical, oriental fashion, they never quite said, No, but it was pretty obvious from the beginning that we weren't likely to reach agreement. So we folded the negotiation up quite quickly and I went on to something else.

The interesting negotiation was with India-not just because I got to travel around India but because we actually were able to sign an agreement. Krishna Menon, who was then Defense Minister of India, raised hell about it and immediately got it canceled, about three days after we signed it.

Q: Talking about your experience at the National War College, which you referred to, if assassination could be done politely, Krishna Menon probably would have been number one on our list. Did you...?

HUMMEL: I'm exaggerating a little there, because I could see that an agreement on a broadcasting transmitter didn't fit the Indian image of themselves. This was kind of a "forced fit." To be in bed with the Americans in an anti-Chinese propaganda installation that would go on for years and years, supposedly-I felt from the beginning that this was a rather flimsy basis for it.

Q: Some of those things, if we had done it, would have been more a source of irritation than anything else.

HUMMEL: I could see that coming. Still, my orders were to attempt to reach such an agreement.

Q: Where were the orders coming from?

HUMMEL: From Henry Loomis the Director of the VOA, who had a very good grasp of all the engineering and other aspects of the broadcasting business, as well as a good grasp of the substance, as I said.

Q: What was your job?

HUMMEL: I was Deputy Director of the VOA under Henry Loomis.

Q: Were negotiations part of your responsibilities?

HUMMEL: Yes.

Q: What about Archbishop Makarios in Cyprus? Did you run across his attitudes and outlook?

HUMMEL: Yes, indeed. We met with him personally several times. However, of course, the negotiations themselves were conducted on a different level.

Q: I'm told that he was a very interesting character.

HUMMEL: This was before the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974, of course, and he was riding high, with Greek backing.

Q: Why didn't Makarios and the Cypriots want to have a larger American radio transmitter? Was there any particular reason given?

HUMMEL: I'm not sure that I can pinpoint that. As in many areas of the Middle East, they felt that they were in a dicey situation. They didn't know what we would broadcast about them in our international news and our worldwide news report. There was just a general hesitation to take sides in this way. They wanted American assistance, and they were getting quite a bit of it. However, they didn't want to go as far as being in bed with the Americans in a propaganda effort.

Q: From your perspective, what was your impression of Edward R. Murrow?

HUMMEL: Oh, I liked him very much. When Henry Loomis was away, negotiating or whatever-he did quite a bit of it himself in Liberia, where we had a huge installation-I was the Acting Director of the VOA. We were constantly being harassed by the ideologues, like Tom Sorensen.

Q: Tom Sorensen.

HUMMEL: He would object at times to the content of the news which the VOA broadcast. We always won those battles, because Murrow never allowed the news to be tampered with. But then there were the contents of commentaries or editorial pieces. Several times I had to go to Ed Murrow and say, "Look, Sorensen and his office are trying to prevent us from putting this thing on the air. I happen to think that this makes sense. Why don't you read it? I'd like you to make a decision." Then we'd always win.

Q: What was Sorensen's position?

HUMMEL: He had influence in the new Kennedy administration. His brother was in the White House. I can't recall exactly what his position was.

Q: His brother was Attorney General.

HUMMEL: I thought that Bobby Kennedy was Attorney General.

Q: We're talking about Sorensen. Oh, you mean Sorensen's brother. Excuse me. Ted Sorensen was the one in the White House. Maybe you were encountering opposition from Tom Sorensen.

HUMMEL: You're right, we had the problems with Tom Sorensen. We were supposed to be trying to put our best foot forward in terms of international positions and attitudes. Self-criticism should not be part of it. That is something of an overstatement, but on the one hand there were liberal Democrats-and that's what we all were-who wanted to demonstrate a full and fair discussion of our internal and international problems. On the other hand Tom Sorensen felt strongly that we should slant everything to have a positive image, and didn't want to get into trouble with his brother over in the White House. So he felt he had a mission to project the very best side of the United States. It was the traditional pull and haul between policy objectives and independent news and commentary.

Q: What was Tom Sorensen's position?

HUMMEL: He was one of the deputies to Murrow-maybe in charge of policy. I forget exactly.

Q: We're talking about the period 1961-1963. What was the outlook then? The normal American outlook is that we are a strong country. We can criticize ourselves. This shows that we're an "open society" and all of that. But in the propaganda field, such as the Voice of America, how did we think that this sort of self-criticism is received-say in China or India or elsewhere? Do we feel that this is a source of strength or weakness?

HUMMEL: We all thought that it was a source of strength, because everybody was hearing these criticisms of the United States from other channels. We might as well acknowledge them. We said, yes, we have serious problems with race relations, particularly involving blacks. I remember vividly the Martin Luther King speech at the Lincoln Memorial in 1963. I walked up there to listen to it.

Q: This was the "I had a dream" speech.

HUMMEL: Yes. The effect was inspirational, and many Americans were affected at that time.

Q: Did Bobby Kennedy play a role at this time? I always think of Bobby Kennedy as being a more rigid ideologue.

HUMMEL: Oh, absolutely. That comes next, in my experience, during my next assignment, in the Bureau of Cultural Affairs in the State Department.

Q: All right. At that time did Congress play much of a role with the Voice of America?

HUMMEL: Yes. Of course, everything had to go through Congressman John Rooney in those days. He was chairman of the subcommittee of the House of Representatives which considered the State Department budget and related matters. That was the principal Congressional problem. He was a nit-picker in terms of the budget. There was the agonizing business of preparing ourselves for budget hearings-Henry Looms and I, and the engineers. We would be asked questions about minutiae. We would try to be prepared for everything. Really, he was in favor of what the administration was doing but he also wanted to make it clear to everybody that he was powerful. He liked to make the witnesses testifying before his subcommittee as uncomfortable as he could. It was a kind of game. He knew right from the beginning where he was going to come out.

Q: But you couldn't play it as a game.

HUMMEL: No. I had to do the same thing again when I was with the Bureau of Cultural Affairs in the State Department, testifying before Congressman Rooney.

Q: What was the feeling about our broadcasts to major areas, such as Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, Japan, and Communist China? Those were our basic targets, weren't they?

HUMMEL: Yes.

Q: What was the impression of the effectiveness of the VOA at that time.

HUMMEL: I'm not sure that we knew. We in the VOA envied "Radio Liberty"...

Q: And "Radio Free Europe?"

HUMMEL: And "Radio Free Europe" in their free-swinging, detached ability to choose what they broadcast. They would reach people who otherwise were not being reached, with information about their own countries or their own areas that their communist rulers would like to suppress. We couldn't try that. I'm glad that we didn't. We didn't try to tell the Chinese what was going on in China. We didn't know enough about it, for one thing. My previous assignment in Hong Kong had convinced me that talking to refugees and people who had come out and reading snippets from the Chinese press which we could get our hands on did not give us sufficiently reliable information about what was going on. So instead we were projecting the United States in what we called a full and fair way. It was tilted, obviously, to some extent, by our desire to make the United States look good. That is, that we have our democratic processes and the things that we were proud of. However, "Radio Liberty" and "Radio Free Europe" were always free to report what they thought had happened in such and such a town, or such and such a place, in Eastern Europe and Russia..

Q: They were also getting much better reports, weren't they? Did you have sort of a big sign, "1956" written on walls? I'm talking about the Hungarian Revolution [of 1956]. Afterwards, there was a concern that, perhaps, we were too active in pushing something approaching a revolt [against the communist leadership of Hungary], when we weren't going to do anything about it in a military way. Was this very much of a consideration in what we were talking about, or had that subsided?

HUMMEL: It had subsided as a major factor, at least in my mind.

Q: Well, what were you trying to do-say in China, which was an area which you obviously knew? What were we trying to get across? The Chinese have a different civilization, a different mind set, and all that. Did you find that we knew what we were doing or was it mainly a matter [of estimating] "What will play well in Dubuque, Iowa?"

HUMMEL: Not in Dubuque, Iowa. By law USIA products are not supposed to be distributed in the United States.

Q: I was being facetious. In other words, were we playing...

HUMMEL: We had to play to the desires of our employers, to put it that way. Including the Sorensen and people in the White House, to the extent that they paid attention to what we were doing. Ed Murrow, with his great prestige, was a member of the inner circle at the White House. He insisted on being in on the takeoff and not just the crash landings. That's all very well, but I was always concerned about the whole USIA business, including the VOA, that the organization was trying to add in the public opinion factors-both here and abroad-to policy formulation. These factors would be added in twice, because the policymakers in the State Department also were considering exactly the same factors-the impact and the do ability of various courses, as well as the impact abroad in terms of public relations. This was not a monopoly of USIA. However, some of the people in USIA thought that it was. They wanted to be closer to the policy process. I was always uncomfortable with this: the idea that the policymakers in the State Department didn't understand public opinion abroad. Of course they did, in the same way that USIS people abroad did. There is an inherent...

Q: I think so. There's also something terribly sexy about being involved in something called "policy." That turns Foreign Service types on. I mean, you like to say that you're in a policymaking position, or something like that, which can mean that you're given less pay. [Laughter]

HUMMEL: On the other hand, there's something terribly sexy about having a program that you can do something about. The State Department has no programs. It doesn't run the Fulbright program, it doesn't run radios. It doesn't send American speakers abroad to talk to people. It doesn't operate libraries. Program functions were alien to it. I saw this even more when I moved over to the Bureau of Cultural Affairs in the State Department in 1963. The Cultural Affairs Bureau, which was managing exchange programs, was the only part of the State Department which had program, operational, functions abroad.

Q: I think it's an inherent problem within the State Department. It often happens that high ranking people in the State Department do not have much management experience.

HUMMEL: That's right.

Q: This creates real problems.

HUMMEL: Spending money for program purposes abroad was something that the State Department never did, except the jurisdiction it originally exercised over the USIS function. Then, after USIA was formed, the State Department clung to cultural affairs and the exchange of persons business, but certainly wasn't comfortable with it, nor did it understand much about managing it.

Q: I'm told that the cultural affairs function was kept out of USIA, where it would naturally seem to fit, essentially because of Senator William Fulbright.

HUMMEL: Exactly.

Q: Were you aware of Senator William Fulbright's influence? At that time he was chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Were you aware of him and of the need to deal with him?

HUMMEL: I don't recall dealing with him directly myself, but others did. Of course, Ed Murrow did, as well as a number of others. Yes, we were acutely aware of his strong interest in what was being done and his very strong desire-repeatedly expressed-to have the exchange of persons business, which bore his name, incidentally, insulated from crass propaganda handled by the information side of the Voice of America and all the other parts of USIA, although the exchange of persons was far larger than just the Fulbright program.

Q: That would seem to be a bit "precious." After all, what is the State Department doing but representing American interests? Were there any attempts made, at that time, to bring cultural affairs into its "natural" habitat [in USIA]?

HUMMEL: There was a successful attempt to keep it in the State Department and not let it be turned over...

Q: I meant any attempt to bring cultural affairs into USIA.

HUMMEL: Yes, efforts were made. In many ways it was awkward not to have cultural affairs in USIA, because the exchange of persons programs are so intimately involved with the library and information functions-with the America Houses and all of these cultural centers that we had in Japan.

Q: There were USIS people who were sitting on the selection boards abroad and so forth for all of these programs.

HUMMEL: That's right.

Q: Well, did you have a problem at the Voice of America in monitoring the people who were doing the broadcasting? Obviously, you had to have native speakers [of the various languages]. And native speakers all have their own "axes to grind." To be sitting at a microphone in the United States, talking to their former countrymen, must be a very powerful position to be in. I was wondering whether this was a concern of yours.

HUMMEL: Not really, because-take the China programs, for example, because there are a couple of dialects involved, both Mandarin and Cantonese. Or consider the Indian language programs. First of all, everything was recorded, so everybody would know later what had happened. Then the broadcasters were not allowed to deviate from the script, which was all written down in English and then translated. You had local language people many who were American citizens who monitored the whole thing. Perhaps more important was the fact that their colleagues would fink on them, if they were to try to deviate from the script or do anything strange over the airwaves. And, of course, they'd lose their jobs. However, we didn't really worry about that because of these checks, and so far as I know it never happened.

Q: Well, tell me a bit about the administrative side. I would think that the Voice of America would be a "difficult" place to work, because you have a lot of ego's and different nationalities, all in one place. Was this a difficult thing to administer?

HUMMEL: Yes, I guess it was. However, it really worked quite well. There were sensible Americans in every language branch. Of course, there were always personal and personnel tensions, for example, with ĩ½migrĩ½s, who were doing some of the work. In those days, I think, relatively few of them had green cards or were U. S. citizens. They understood the process. Sometimes, the scripts would start out in Chinese-as they did, quite often. The news, of course, came straight out of the central news room. We were not allowed to tamper with the news portions of the broadcasts. Those were simply translated into Chinese or whatever language was involved. However, commentaries, editorial matter, and features-these things quite often would be initially drafted in the local language. They would have to be translated into English before they could be approved for broadcast.

Q: What was the feeling toward the BBC [British Broadcasting Corporation] at that time? A rival, or...

HUMMEL: Yes. Seen with some envy because most of us felt that they were a bit ahead of us in style and listenership.

Q: Did you have a poll or sampling to figure out who was listening and who wasn't?

HUMMEL: Yes, we tried it where we could. There were various ways of doing this-for example, asking people to send us postcards. In a place like Communist China you couldn't do that-until we actually had an office on Mainland China. Then we could ask people to send postcards to our Consulates in China. However, from Eastern Europe and from the Soviet Union, to some extent, we could get feedback from our listeners. Of course, on the technical side we had monitors who drove around the countries we could get into, carrying their receivers, trying to figure out whether the signal was coming in properly, and so forth.

Q: Regarding the BBC, you say that you sort of envied them. What did you feel that they were doing that we weren't doing?

HUMMEL: I think that there is a kind of Anglophilia that many Americans have. BBC broadcasters have a nice and precise use of language. The whole tone of BBC broadcasts is rather upscale. It seems to me that the BBC sounded more authoritative, somehow, than the VOA.

Q: Were there any innovations put in during the time that you were there with the VOA? Anything you can recall? Different types of shows, or anything like that, especially with the Kennedy administration coming into office and looking at things [from a fresh point of view]?

HUMMEL: I don't recall any special changes in format. We were under the gun, of course, in bureaucratic terms. Before my time we had the Psychological Strategy Board, or PSB, run out of the White House. This was the supervisory body for all of the overseas information and cultural programs, as well as psychological strategy in the Cold War. That was quite an apparatus under the Eisenhower administration. At least, I think it started out under Eisenhower. It had quite a big staff. I'm talking about things before my time that I don't have direct knowledge of. However, I have the strong impression that the PSB exercised perhaps closer supervision and criticism and issued more directives than the Kennedy administration did, over programs of this kind.

Q: When did you move over to the Bureau of Cultural Affairs in the State Department? Was it some time in 1963?

HUMMEL: The summer of 1963.

Q: Was that just a normal switch, or...

HUMMEL: Well, it was a normal time for me to leave VOA after two years, but it was not at all common for career USIS officers to be sent to State, except in this Cultural Affairs Bureau. I was very pleased to get over into the State Department because, as it turned out, I was able to get a foothold there and stay there. I was dissatisfied with the long-term future of remaining in USIA. I very much liked being a Public Affairs Officer in Hong Kong, Deputy PAO in Japan, and PAO in Burma. Those are great jobs, and I liked them very much. But I didn't want to do them for the rest of my [working] life. That's what so many of my friends in USIA are doing now.

Q: You mean, just one PAO job after another?

HUMMEL: Yes, mixed in with some stints here in Washington in USIA. These jobs in Washington are more frustrating than being in the field.

Q: I think that this indicates that USIA really didn't have a good career pattern, particularly when you move further up. If I recall correctly, weren't the appointments even "tentative"?

HUMMEL: Well, we had our own career Foreign Service. It wasn't integrated with the Foreign Service under the Department of State, nor should it have been at that time. We didn't have the qualifications.

Q: Then you came over to Cultural Affairs, which was known as CU, wasn't it? You served there from 1963 to 1965. What was your job?

HUMMEL: I was deputy-I think that, at that time, I was the only deputy-to Lucius Battle, who was in charge of the bureau as Assistant Secretary. He was my boss for, I think, about a year and a half. During the last six months I was there, my boss was Harry McPherson, who came over from the White House. However, he didn't last very long because he was so close to President Lyndon Baines Johnson that LBJ kept drafting him back to the White House for one job or another. He'd have to spend a lot of his time over there.

Q: What was the function of [the Bureau of] Cultural Affairs?

HUMMEL: The exchange of persons programs-all kinds of them. These involved scholars, Fulbright people, and lecturers, both coming to the U. S. and American lecturers going overseas. We were responsible to two oversight panels, composed of very prestigious people. I enjoyed getting to know famous American writers, historians, and philosophers, who were on these boards. They supervised the selection of foreigners and Americans, going both ways.

Earlier on, we mentioned Bobby Kennedy. Bobby was in charge of an organization called The Youth Committee.

Q: Yes. The reason I said, "Yes," was that I was in Yugoslavia at the time. We were supposed to identify future leaders and youth. We looked at the people we were selecting. They were all in their 50's at that time. I think that it took 20 years before people of that generation moved into their 70's and let go of power.

HUMMEL: Bobby Kennedy was quite unnecessarily abrasive in these meetings which we would have. It wasn't just with this Youth Committee program. It was with everything he touched, as far as I could see. His style was to crack the whip. We got along with him all right. Luke Battle was very expert in this. I think that Battle was the chairman of the Youth Committee in the State Department. However, Bobby Kennedy would sit there at his right hand, criticizing, suggesting, and prodding. We had other people on this committee, which included people from the Pentagon, the Treasury Department, and the Agriculture Department. Everybody was supposed to be involved in this.

Q: What was the rationale for the Youth Committee and how did it work out, as far as what we were doing during this period?

HUMMEL: There was a nugget of good sense in this, it seemed to me. Traditionally-well, the Foreign Service and the rest of the government run too much on tradition. We don't pay enough attention to outsiders, dissidents, and people who might take over later on, both pro-government and anti-government, in their own countries. There was a rationale for spreading out and putting more emphasis on identifying young military officers who might come to power, and so forth. So there was a job that needed to be done. I guess that, in spite of all the friction that Bobby Kennedy enjoyed causing, it was probably a good thing to do. I think that what he did echoes to this day-the broadening of contacts of all kinds between the United States and foreign countries-beyond just the traditional leaders.

Q: We had a very well developed program, even by that time, in Western Europe. Many of the leaders today [in those countries] visited the United States, at one time or another. Did we have any particular target areas? Let's talk about Western Europe first. Were there any areas where we could have done more and other areas where we did well?

HUMMEL: I don't know how to answer that. I'm just not aware of any.

Q: I would have thought that France and Italy [were areas where we could have done more]. Italy, because Italians don't tend to work in English very much. And France, because France is France, would be somewhat inoculated against American culture, whereas the British and the Germans have a lot of cultural exchange with the United States-both before and certainly after World War II.

HUMMEL: I think that in both of the countries that you mentioned the Americans who were actually on the ground were always quite well received and welcomed, in spite of a local institutional bias against the "crass" and "overbearing" United States. In spite of that, the information centers and the USIS libraries, under whose auspices American writers and lecturers would travel to France and Italy, were individually welcome, despite the institutional, psychological bias. I can't remember now when the SAIS [School of Advanced International Studies] Center in Bologna started. That was obviously very well received and still is.

Q: The SAIS Center in Bologna is run by Johns Hopkins University.

HUMMEL: And there are the Amerika Hauser in Germany, which were-and still are-very important centers. Now, with the proliferation of the media and media outlets everywhere, I suppose that the pie of American cultural contacts is very much bigger and, therefore, the official American slice of it is smaller.

Q: The Kennedy administration, followed by the Johnson administration, put a great deal of emphasis on Africa, which was considered a newly emerging continent. Most African countries are quite recently independent. The colonial powers hadn't done that much in the way of educating them. What was our policy and how did we deal with this discrepancy in education? Europe was easy, in a way, but I think that Africa presented quite a challenge.

HUMMEL: Yes. A lot of money was put into cultural centers, exchanges of persons, and even radio broadcasts. I didn't mention that I'd found Africa extremely fascinating as a subject. During my year at the National War College [1960-1961] we all went on a one-month trip abroad. I think that money for trips like that is a problem now. I don't know if they do it for a month. I elected to go around Africa. The group I was with stopped in Libya, Morocco, Liberia and several other stops in West Africa, South Africa, Kenya, Ethiopia, and so on. I found it really, extraordinarily fascinating and worth further study. Actually, my National War College thesis was on the Non-Aligned Movement [NAM], which was busily bringing into its fold all of the newly independent African countries.

Q: Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana was one of the major leaders of the NAM. What about our exchange program? I would have thought that it would have been a problem. We wanted to do something there, but the educational background just wasn't up to other areas.

HUMMEL: That's true. However, we would spend extra money on Fulbrighters who would come to the United States. Many of them would have to go through a whole year of English language training before they could begin their academic work. A lot of thought was given to how to reach people from African countries. Of course, Africa was not a barren place, culturally or educationally. Most of the African countries had some sort of college or university already established at the time of independence. Christian missionaries had been at work in Africa for a long time. So there was a small pool of trained people. And the smaller the pool, the more likely that they would be leaders later on.

Q: It was easier to target the future leaders. [In the 1960's] we were going through a difficult time in terms of race relations. It was a difficult but also a positive time. Things were changing. With Africans coming from Black Africa to a country like the U. S. which still had "seething" racial problems, how did we handle that?

HUMMEL: All of the people from Black Africa, India, and other non-white countries knew what they were coming to in the United States. Some of them had bad experiences. An astonishing number of them did not, particularly when they wore their national costumes. That kept them out of the way of anti-black sentiment in some places.

Q: Did we try to place African, and even Indian, students in universities away from points of tension?

HUMMEL: I suppose so, yes, but it was up to the universities whether to accept them. In the early 1960's, I guess, the University of Mississippi wouldn't have wanted to accept dark skinned people. So there was a process of self-selection.

Q: What about Latin America? We had the Alliance for Progress. What was your impression of our exchange program with Latin America?

HUMMEL: Well, I don't think that I paid a great deal of attention to it. I simply don't know.

Q: Traditionally, Latin America has sent many of its people to the United States for higher education, anyway. We probably didn't pay that much attention to the Latin American program because there were other areas where we wanted to reach out and make contact. There may have been a kind of "benign neglect" of Latin America, but the other aspect is that there are plenty of universities which have always had large numbers of Latin American students. I'm working at Georgetown University now. It has always had a very strong Latin American contingent. Maybe this program was almost working on its own.

HUMMEL: Aside from the programs I was dealing with directly, in the Bureau of Cultural Affairs, other U. S. institutions, notably the Pentagon, had very large programs for providing military training to Latin American officers and enlisted men. This is something which is quite often forgotten and not included in the equation. The impact of a year at some American military installation, such as Ft. Leavenworth or Ft. Knox, we all felt, must be quite great. As far as I know, most of the experiences of people selected by the Pentagon were positive. This military training program has been under-reported.

Q: That's a very valid point. During your time in Cultural Affairs, did we have any exchanges with Eastern Europe or the Soviet Union?

HUMMEL: Yes, but relatively few and, of course, they were designated by the governments concerned-particularly by the Soviet government. They sent scientists in particular, but there were also visits by poets and writers-fairly few in number, because the Soviets didn't want too many people to visit the U. S. The Soviets had their own objectives in the United States. They had their own programs, on some of which we collaborated with them.

Q: How did you find the way the exchange program fitted into the State Department? Did you find that you were sort of a "stepchild" or...

HUMMEL: Very much so. As I said a little earlier, this was the only operating program in the State Department budget which actually did things, apart from renting houses and paying people. This program sent people abroad and took care of foreign nationals when they were here. By the way, before we leave the subject, I want to pay tribute to the way in which the State Department and localities all over the United States collaborated in making visits by foreigners useful and productive. The way people took them into their homes-this whole volunteer setup, all over the United States-was a fantastic thing and still is. I can't tell you how many people have told me, in the course of my overseas assignments, how touched and influenced they were by just seeing, living, and staying two or three nights with farm families or in a small town-and seeing what people were actually like. This network of people is a tribute to American society as a whole. I don't think the State Department can take all credit for it, except for furnishing the people who went through it.

Q: This kind of program really brings out the best in the U. S., I think.

By the time you left Cultural Affairs, were you pretty well into the State Department apparatus? At that time how did one switch over from being a Foreign Service Information Officer to being a Foreign Service Officer?

HUMMEL: I had very much wanted to arrange for lateral entry into the State Department. There were many programs of this kind going on at that time. Ed Murrow thought that the term, "lateral entry" was obscene. [Laughter] I think that many FSO's thought the same.

I still don't know how it happened but I was very fortunate. Somebody in USIA put me up for a regular State Department job overseas. That turned out to be Deputy Chief of Mission, DCM in Taiwan, in view of my knowledge of the Chinese language, my experience in Hong Kong, and so on. Looking back, I really was not qualified to be a DCM, because I had never been that close to the guts of State Department operations.

Q: I'm not sure that most Political Officers who end up being DCM's have any particular qualifications, either.

HUMMEL: I had a special handicap. In Taiwan, I knew the language. They knew me from my Chinese contacts in Washington and Hong Kong. I'd visited Taiwan when I was stationed in Hong Kong. In Taiwan it was a very interesting situation for me and for the whole Embassy there. Admiral Jerauld Wright, the previous Ambassador, had already left the country. Ambassador Walter McConaughy had already received assignment, but he was in Pakistan and was going to be transferred to Taiwan. The India-Pakistan War of 1965 came, and the Department did not transfer him immediately, so the dream of every DCM came about for me. I was Chargé d'Affaires for one full year before Ambassador McConaughy showed up.

There were only two people in the top levels of the American Mission who did not change during that year. In other words, I was one of a whole, new clean sweep. The Political Counselor, Bob Lindquist, was really a jewel who kept me afloat. The Political Counselor and the commander of the Taiwan Defense Command continued on. Everybody else, including the chief of the MAAG [Military Assistance and Advisory Group], the Economic Counselor, the chief of the Consular Section, the attachés...

Q: The Public Affairs Officer too?

HUMMEL: Yes. Everybody changed at the same time. It was terribly bad planning.

Q: This happens sometimes. I was in Greece at one time, when the Greek Army colonels took over [the Greek government]. A whole new team came in at the American Embassy. We had no "baggage," but we also had no experience.

HUMMEL: When I arrived in Taipei, I had two weeks' overlap with Ralph Clough, my predecessor as DCM. He is a very good and solid character, as you know, and did a good job of getting me started. We had one, extraordinary hitch. That was when we sat in the Bubble Room, the classified conference room.

Q: It's a room [built of plastic] inside another room. No windows, just drapes. Fans blowing to make "white noise" so that you can't be overheard.

HUMMEL: That's right. So the room can't be bugged. A whole bunch of us sat there, counting the E&E money. E&E stands for the Emergency and Evacuation program. In those days we had a stock of—I don't know how many—perhaps 100 gold bars.

Q: You used gold bars? I was in [the Consulate General in] Dhahran [Saudi Arabia]. I think that we had British gold sovereigns for potential, emergency use.

HUMMEL: We probably had some of those, too. And we had an enormous amount of American dollars in cash and local currency. I don't remember the totals but I do remember one thing. That is, \$7,000 was missing.

Q: Oh, God!

HUMMEL: Ralph Clough had signed for it when he arrived. All that I could do was sign and note that \$7,000 were missing. This caused quite a bit of turmoil, but the problem was quickly resolved. It turned out that the Gunnery Sergeant in charge of the Marine Guards at the Embassy and who was responsible for security somehow had gotten, not only the combination to the outside safe, but the inner safes, which he should not have had. He was able to get into those, too. He'd swiped the money and lost it in gambling.

Q: Oh, my God!

HUMMEL: Do you know, the Marines didn't fire him? The Marine Corps takes care of its own in a very peculiar way. He was transferred and he had to make restitution. However, he was not kicked out of the Marine Corps. I've never understood that. Anyway, that was a trivial thing that happened when I took over.

Q: You were there from 1965 to 1967.

HUMMEL: 1965 to 1968.

Q: What was the political situation in Taiwan?

HUMMEL: It was very much under control. Chiang Kai-shek was in charge, and his son, Chiang Ching-Kuo, was Minister of Defense. I got to know them all extremely well. I had dozens of personal meetings with them, one on one. Direct conversations with Chiang Kai-shek himself. We had a lot of business to handle, including commercial problems. We had incidents which I learned of from the CIA Chief of Station-incidentally, he was newly arrived at the post, too. There was a huge CIA establishment there.

Q: What was it doing? Was it sort of outward looking [and engaged in] "China watching?"

HUMMEL: It was mostly China watching.

Q: It wasn't concentrating on what was happening in Taiwan?

HUMMEL: Not concentrating, but that was also a target for the CIA Station. They did a pretty good job of that, too. We would discover, generally through the CIA Chief of Station, that the Chinese Nationalists there were training people to use rubber boats to go to the Mainland and carry out pinprick raids and so forth and maybe capture some unfortunate sentry, kidnap him back to Taiwan and grill him. This was absolutely forbidden. The United States had insisted, you will not do this. We will not assist you in any way. There will be hell to pay if we catch you at it. But the Nationalists kept preparing operations like this, often with the knowledge and assistance of the 500th U. S. Army Intelligence Unit. So we would have to rap knuckles all over the place when we learned of an operation like this.

Taiwan was on a very even keel. My arrival in Taiwan coincided exactly with the end of the last fiscal year in which we gave any AID assistance to Taiwan. Taiwan had "graduated." The Chinese Nationalists were very nervous about this. They wanted us to continue the aid program. But we said, "No, you've graduated." Everything went very well. All the AID people left, except one, who was a member of the Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction, JCRR, which had been extremely successful, first on the Mainland, in land reform. They were the ones who helped to spark the land reform in Taiwan, which produced the capital and the impetus for the enormous progress which they have made.

Having these conversations with Chiang Kai-shek and knowing Mme. Chiang Kai-shek, also known as "Madamissima," and Chiang Ching-Kuo, whom I got to know very well, personally-this was quite a heady experience.

Q: What was your impression of all three of them? Let's do one at a time. First, the Generalissimo, at this period of his long career.

HUMMEL: Well, I could see-and I knew the Chinese pretty well by that time, after my time with the Chinese Nationalist guerrillas during World War II-that he was a very old fashioned, authoritarian figure. Not very well educated. Not understanding a whole lot about the dynamics of foreign countries, even the government of the United States, which, I would think, he ought to have known better. How we work, what Congress does, what can be done, and what can't be done. He was very narrow minded and authoritarian. Yet, you had to give him credit for holding the country together during the anti-Japanese war.

I've never seen a complete figure, but it must be that somewhere around 85 percent of all of the soldiers killed by the Japanese during World War II were Chinese Nationalists. True, the Chinese Communists were extremely successful in their guerrilla warfare-much more successful than the Chinese Nationalists. True, the Chinese Communists also lost people. However, it was in these horrible, huge, set piece battles that the Chinese Nationalists lost so heavily. The Japanese repeatedly tried to take Chungking and weren't able to do it. Chiang Kai-shek held a Chinese coalition together which was corrupt, did not respond to the aspirations of most Chinese, lost the Civil War, and yet he remained a sterling figure. You could see his iron will, assisted by long experience. I would say that there were people who were trickier and maybe smarter than he was around him.

Q: I think that one of the great things that happened on Taiwan was that a land reform was carried through, and Taiwan did not turn into a replica of mainland China. It appears that Chiang Kai-shek learned a lesson, or something like that.

HUMMEL: There was a self examination session by the KMT, which hasn't been reported very well. The Chinese Nationalist leaders on Taiwan decided, among other things, that they would not allow the same mistakes on Taiwan that they had committed in Japanese-occupied China: the takeover of the whole economy by people who had come over from mainland China. The result of the land reform on Taiwan was that the Taiwanese landlords were paid off in bonds. Some of them sold the bonds, some of them used the bonds as collateral. Today the big, big businessmen in Taiwan are Taiwanese-not mainlanders. In this self examination business in 1949 and 1950 the Chinese Nationalists evidently put their finger on their problems. They decided that corruption and the overbearing attitudes of the mainlanders could not be continued.

There was a horrible incident which rankles to this day among the Taiwanese. In 1947 there was a riot against the mainlanders, and thousands of people were shot by the occupying, Nationalist troops. After 40 years under the Japanese in a very peaceful, calm atmosphere, that was a horrible thing to have happen.

That was in 1947. By the time the whole Nationalist government moved to Taiwan in 1949, they knew that they had to have a very different kind of relationship with Taiwan and also a different kind of government apparatus. To give the KMT party credit, they have successively co-opted all of the issues advanced by the opposition. That's the way anybody should act to stay in power. To this day, even though the KMT is splitting up a bit, and there is a pro-independence party, there is a truly open, multi-party society, with elections and so on. The Kuomintang still knows how to survive and co-opt other people's issues. About 70 percent of the membership of the Kuomintang is now Taiwanese.

Q: Still with reference to the time that you were there in Taiwan, what was the role of Mme. Chiang Kai-shek?

HUMMEL: Well, she was known to be mercurial. I don't think that anybody really liked her. I never liked her. In her disingenuous way she attracted a great deal of American attention during the fight against the Japanese, with her lectures and speech tours. When she spoke to the Congress of the United States, for example. I thought that she was a spoiled, ex-beauty who was surrounded by the Soong family, some of whom were very unsavory and corrupt characters. Nevertheless, she was still an important figure. I knew that it would be very important not to make an enemy of her. I never really had any occasion to run up against her or to go contrary to her desires, as I did later with Mrs. Ne Win in Burma or as Bill Sullivan did with Mrs. Marcos in the Philippines.

Q: You've referred to corruption. I speak as a former professional consular officer. Did the corruption basically involve visas, passports, and that sort of thing? Was this a source of irritation to you-getting requests and pressure from the upper reaches of Chinese Nationalist society?

HUMMEL: No. I think that we might have had one, minor scandal, where we caught one Chinese staff member in the Embassy, falsifying papers. But that was trivial. The corruption was not a matter of demanding visas. The corruption didn't involve the United States. The corruption involved the public funds of Taiwan. We were really not involved.

Q: What about Chiang Ching-Kuo, the Generalissimo's son? What was your impression of him?

HUMMEL: I liked him. He had an unsavory past as a really iron-fisted enforcer of security in Shanghai and on the mainland of China. He was obviously a tough character. However, we got along very nicely. We had a lot of business to handle-mainly Defense Department matters. He was Defense Minister. His Russian wife was very nice and pleasant. I don't know how many times my wife and I have been to their house for dinner with just one round table set. We got along very nicely. He was smart.

I once arranged to have a message passed to him because there was going to be a worldwide airline boycott of Taiwan because a court in Taiwan was going to sentence an American pilot to a substantial term in prison because of an accident which was not his fault at all. It was a faulty beacon that caused a plane crash. Most of the passengers survived.

Anyway, this was the kind of thing that I wanted to be sure that he knew about and that this was a real problem. If IFALPA, the International Federation of Air Line Pilots Associations, was going to boycott Taiwan, it was a very real threat. They can do it if they want to, as you know. It is a very powerful union-then and now. Chiang Ching-Kuo called me back and said, Why didn't you come to me with this? Why did you have somebody else leave a message for me? He was a little bit angry. He thought that our relationship was close enough so that I shouldn't have left it to any intermediary. He was right. I should have gone directly to him. Yet, interfering with the court system in Taiwan-which is what he did-well, I was thinking like an American instead of like a Chinese, which I should have been able to do.

Q: You arrived in Taiwan, and here you were, chargé d'affaires for a year. Were you able to play the "Nationalist guerrilla" card with the KMT? The fact that, as a young man, you had been involved with the Nationalist guerrillas-was this something that helped you?

HUMMEL: Yes. This gave me a certain amount of face. They knew about it in advance. Some of my Chinese Nationalist guerrilla friends were there in Taiwan. I used to see them fairly frequently. Maybe I mentioned previously that the commander of this guerrilla unit wrote a book which, slowly and in desultory fashion, I am translating into English. It's about his experiences and is called, "Eight Years of War." Yes, it was an asset to me to be known as a friend of Taiwan who had fought as a member of KMT guerrillas.

Q: During your approximately three years in Taiwan, were there any major issues that we had to deal with?

HUMMEL: No, I don't think so. It was too early for the issue of Taiwan's clandestine nuclear activity to be a problem. That came along later. We had to move quickly to squash that, as we did in the case of South Korea. The Chinese Nationalists had a constant desire to do something with Mainland China-conduct clandestine raids or launch balloons, or something like that. I don't think that we did anything to stop them from sending balloons carrying propaganda over Mainland China when the prevailing winds were right. We certainly had to keep the Chinese Nationalists on a short leash for intelligence operations. They, of course, conducted intelligence operations through Hong Kong. Frankly, we never knew a great deal about that. They managed to screen that off from us. But this was not a problem for us. I'm trying to think of any major difficulties that we had, but I can't recall any.

Q: What was the status of Quemoy [Kinmen] and Matsu? Were the Chinese Nationalists and Communists still shelling each other in those days?

HUMMEL: Yes, but only shells containing propaganda leaflets. Of course, the shell casings were lethal, when they landed. They would fall somewhere and would injure or kill somebody. Then those exchanges dwindled down to every other day.

Q: With time off for holidays. At one time we were concerned that the Chinese Nationalists had put too many of their troops into Quemoy and Matsu. Was that still a problem, were we trying to persuade them to "pull back," or did we just feel that it wasn't a good idea to put so many of their eggs in a basket?

HUMMEL: This issue had been fought out in the 1950's, when the Chinese Nationalists had two major confrontations with the Chinese Communists over Quemoy Island. I went over to Quemoy by plane a couple of times, as everybody does, and saw all of those underground caverns. They virtually force you to drink this very fiery brandy which they make there. It's quite an experience to look through the binoculars, as it used to be in Hong Kong, into Communist China.

These confrontations-particularly the one in 1957-were particularly dangerous, when the Chinese Communists asked the Soviets to make threats against our involvement, while the Chinese Communists were seriously trying to take over Quemoy Island. There was an enormous amount of shelling, preparation of landing craft, and so on. We provided landing craft to help to resupply the Nationalist garrison. So we were heavily involved. In fact, we figured out ways-this is all in the publicly available record-to threaten to use atomic weapons against Communist China to resolve that crisis. I hope this was an empty threat. In any case, Quemoy survived. So the Chinese Nationalist troops on Quemoy were no longer an issue.

Q: What was the general feeling in the Embassy at that time as to the direction of Mainland China?

HUMMEL: Well, we didn't know. The fact of the Sino-Soviet split became public knowledge around 1960. We had not fully appreciated the implications of this, because, as far as we were concerned, Mainland China was still exceedingly hostile to the United States, even though it no longer formed a solid bloc with the Soviet Union. China's irredentist ambitions were not known. This, of course, was before we became involved in the Vietnam War. China was considered one of our potential enemies.

Q: How did you see relations with Congress? At one point there was Senator Knowland, Congressman Judd, and others in the "China Lobby." We're talking about the period from 1965 to 1968. Did our Congress play much of a role then, or was it a pretty stable period?

HUMMEL: It was a pretty stable period. Foreign policy was bipartisan, was fully and staunchly supportive of the Chinese Nationalists, and was strongly opposed to Communist China-apparently with good reason. The "China Lobby" didn't have anybody to fight against.

Q: Did the problem of royalties and intellectual property in general come up? Most of us in the Foreign Service have a book or two tucked away which were illegally printed in Taiwan. I had a copy of the "Complete Works of Rudyard Kipling," which I bought somewhere. How did you deal with this?

HUMMEL: We were never told by Washington to make a full court press on this issue. We would have had to threaten retaliation before the Chinese Nationalist government would take any action. In fact, this issue has only been cleaned up in the last three years or so.

Q: I suppose that the argument was that Taiwan still had a somewhat fragile economy, and we were concerned that we might upset other things if we really...

HUMMEL: I think that it was just the lack of pressure from the publishers. They knew what was going on and they would make complaints. We would pass the complaints on, but nobody decided to make it a major issue at that time. As of now, intellectual property is one of the major issues outstanding with the PRC and rightly so. However, at the time there just wasn't the pressure from the publishing industry.

Q: These things have their cycles, I guess. When did Ambassador Walter McConaughy arrive in Taiwan? You'd worked with him before, hadn't you? He was Ambassador in a number of places and was one of the major figures in the [Bureau of East Asian Affairs]. How did he operate?

HUMMEL: Everybody thinks that it was true, that Walter McConaughy was a nice, Southern gentleman-considerate and courtly.

Q: He was from Alabama?

HUMMEL: Yes. His wife was a beautiful woman-very pleasant, very nice to the staff, and so forth. I'll tell you that when Walter arrived, at first, his wife had refused to fly. So she came to Taipei by boat, two and one-half months later. Those two and one-half months were the worst time I ever had in my life, because Walter was not a gentleman. He nit-picked everything. Everything that happened which he didn't like was somehow my fault or was done by my people. I really seriously considered asking for a transfer. However, as soon as his wife arrived, things calmed down.

The Chinese Nationalists were glad to have him as American Ambassador. The KMT government knew that he was a staunch friend. He'd been Consul General in Shanghai and Hong Kong.

Q: He had the reputation of being very conservative. "Right wing" is the wrong term. But he was not wishy-washy about recognition of Communist China.

HUMMEL: And he was very upset when it happened in 1974 but he was retired by that time. After his wife arrived in Taipei and he settled down, things went rather well. He remained a terrible nit-picker. He couldn't handle the job of Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of East Asian Affairs.

Q: He had trouble with the Kennedy's.

HUMMEL: Well, it wasn't really that. He just couldn't move the paperwork on his desk. He just couldn't bear to let things go without thinking them over for a long, long time. This habit showed up in the way he would go over with a very fine tooth comb all of the outgoing telegrams brought to him. He would sometimes delay transmission beyond what I would have liked.

One thing that I didn't mention about the period when I was chargé d'affaires was a series of confrontations I had with the general commanding the Taiwan Defense Command.

Q: This was an American general?

HUMMEL: Yes.

Q: What was he, a major general?

HUMMEL: I think so. As I said, he was one of the people who stayed on after I arrived. I was "the new boy," as far as he was concerned. He constantly tested the limits of what he could do directly with the Chinese Nationalist Government or with Chiang Kai-shek, for instance sending direct invitations to Chiang Kai-shek to visit an aircraft carrier, without my knowledge and without going through me. Now, that's absolutely wrong because the Ambassador is in charge of everything, until there's a wartime situation or active combat. Then, of course, the military take over. I had some real head to head discussions with him about this. He would grumble a bit and go away. Then he'd do the same thing again, later on-presumably to test the limits of my supervision of him. He may have thought that, because I was a new boy, I might be a patsy. That is one aspect of dealing with military commanders.

Q: From the point of view of the American military and also the Embassy, what was our impression of the Chinese Nationalist military establishment?

HUMMEL: We had no feeling that they were ineffectual. We thought that they were pretty staunch and ready. They were constantly carrying on training exercises and constantly upgrading their equipment and teaching their people how to use the equipment. Hawk anti-aircraft missiles were easily absorbed into their training programs. We thought that they made good use of the equipment that we gave or sold to them. The Chinese Nationalists were good pilots. They maintained their aircraft very well.

Q: I've never served in Taiwan, but I remember that, at one time, the comment was made that they had an "aging" Army, because all of the Chinese Nationalist troops that came over from the mainland [were getting older]. They had to keep these troops occupied. Had this problem been worked out by the time you were there?

HUMMEL: Yes. I don't know what would happen today, but during my time there I think that most Taiwanese felt, just as the Mainlanders did, that there was a perceptible danger of the Chinese Communists coming over, taking over Taiwan, and doing very bad things to the people. The KMT Government did a very good job of smoothly organizing retirement programs for the soldiers who had come over from the mainland of China and who were overage. They got them out of the Army and into productive enterprises-sometimes government monopolies. They took care of them medically, put them into businesses, and so forth. They had an excellent program for them. So although the ranks of the military were constantly being taken over by Taiwanese, replacing mainlanders, the state of readiness was still pretty good. However, the high-ranking remained on duty-to this day. Quite a few of them are mainland Chinese.

Q: What was your impression of our language officers? We had a pretty solid language program going.

HUMMEL: Yes, we did.

Q: What your impression of the type of people who were going into this program?

HUMMEL: They were very good. That was an excellent program. During all of these years of estrangement from mainland China it's a great credit to the State Department that it kept people going through this training, so that we were ready with language officers at all levels when the opening to the mainland came.

Q: Were there any pressures that you were aware of to "tone down" the Chinese language program? Did anyone say, "Well, after all, you only have Taiwan and Hong Kong, and what's the point of it?"

HUMMEL: We had set up positions for Chinese language officers in London, New Delhi, all of the Southeast Asian capitals, and Japan in addition to Taiwan and Hong Kong to keep track of what they knew about China and had who some insight into the Chinese communities there. I'm not aware of any serious threat to the Chinese language training program.

Q: Let's stop at this point and then pick up, next time, on how you were appointed Ambassador to Burma and your service in that country?

HUMMEL: Good.

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Q: Today is February 6, 1995. We have followed your career up to the point where you were completing your tour of duty as DCM in Taiwan. How did your next assignment as Ambassador to Burma come about?

HUMMEL: Well, that's a very good question. I might say that I was just lucky, I guess, in the words of the old joke. William P. Bundy was the Assistant Secretary of East Asian and Pacific Affairs. He had apparently liked the way I handled things when I was chargé d'affaires in Taipei for a year, as I explained earlier. On one of his visits to Taipei, I let it be known-I think that it was inadvertently-that I spoke a fair amount of Burmese, since I had previously been in Burma as Public Affairs Officer. He hadn't realized that, but it obviously registered with him.

I would also like to think that my style of dealing with Washington on sensitive matters made a difference. That is, when I presented a problem, I always tried to suggest a solution in the same message. I discovered later that not all Foreign Service Officers do that. They often toss a problem to Washington and then ask for instructions. I didn't like to do that.

I think that my batting average was fairly high, though I didn't mind being turned down or overruled. For instance, as I think I said earlier, we used to have to restrain the Chinese Nationalist Army from doing stupid things like pinprick raids against the mainland, entirely contrary to our agreement with the Nationalists. This, of course, was well before we had any relationship with Mainland China. We didn't want to have any more blowups in the Taiwan Straits.

I would get word through my American intelligence people that the Chinese Nationalists were planning on doing something silly. Along with my intelligence officer, in order to protect the source, I would report what we knew on the matter back to Washington through an appropriate and secret channel. Then I usually would add a suggestion, a form of words to protect the source in Taiwan and also to get through to Chiang Ching-Kuo, the son of Chiang Kai-shek and Defense Minister, whom I knew very well. Quite often the word would come back from Washington, "OK, do it the way you suggested." I think that that style appealed to Bill Bundy. It was also an indication that I was an "activist," not a "passive" Foreign Service Officer, of whom there are quite a few. I think that was one of the reasons why Bill Bundy chose me to be nominated to the White House as Ambassador to Burma. This came up at a fortuitous time, obviously.

Q: How was the appointment handled?

HUMMEL: Well, Lyndon B. Johnson was President. He had a practice that, if he were not the first person to announce the appointment-in other words, if news of it leaked-he would cancel the whole thing.

Q: Yes, I've heard about that.

HUMMEL: So for a couple of months my life was very strange. I came back from Taiwan after three years there ostensibly for home leave. Fortunately, we were moving houses in Taipei. That is, a change was being made in the DCM's house, which was very modest, to a larger house, which was considerably more prestigious and actually was more suitable. It had formerly belonged to the AID Agency for International Development Mission, which had already left. We had terminated the AID mission in Taipei. My personal effects were all "loose packed," anyway.

My wife and I came back to the U. S. on home leave, knowing that it was likely, if things worked out, that we would not be going back to Taipei, but unable to tell anyone. So we hung around Washington and elsewhere, unable to tell our friends and not telling even our children, staying on and on, going out of Washington and up to Vermont and other places, trying to lie low, afraid that a rumor would leak out that I was going to be appointed go to Burma. If that happened, LBJ would cancel the appointment. Well, it worked out all right. The impending appointment did not leak out into the newspapers, and I was able to go to Burma as Ambassador.

Q: I might point out that this has come up a number of times. [During the Johnson administration] it was a very nervous time for ambassadorial appointees. Really, there was no particular reason to have had this nervousness.

HUMMEL: Except for LBJ's penchant for secrecy. That was a pretty powerful reason.

Q: The government really jumped to LBJ's particular personality. Was there any problem with confirmation [by the Senate]?

HUMMEL: No, not at all.

Q: Before you went to Burma, this was your first assignment as Ambassador, but you'd actually been the equivalent of an Ambassador as chargé d'affaires to an important country for a long time. How did you prepare yourself for going out to Burma? You'd been there before.

HUMMEL: As soon as the appointment was even rumored, I spent a lot of time with the Burma desk officer in the State Department. I had secretly been reading unclassified material at home, of course, about recent events in Burma. I guess that was the way we prepared for the assignment. We were both delighted-Betty Lou and I. We had so many friends there. The Ambassador's Residence is a marvelous place to live. It's located in a large, 12 acre compound, which also contains the DCM's residence. It is on a lake-each of us had our sailboat docks. We rented sailboats from a boating club. Each of us had his own tennis court. You couldn't expect the DCM and the Ambassador to play on the same court! It was really fairly luxurious. But more than that, the Burmese people are so terribly nice. Even though the Burmese Government, with its program of stupid, Left wing socialism, was attempting to cramp everybody's style and was ruining the economy, the very nice Burmese people made up for it all. We were very much looking forward to being there, and it turned out to be a very good experience.

Q: You served in Burma from 1968 to 1971. What were United States interests in Burma at that time?

HUMMEL: Fairly slender, until the very last bit of my time there as Ambassador. We didn't have overriding interests in Burma. Burma was surviving. The government was terrible, but human rights was not at the top of our agenda at that time. This, of course, was before the Carter administration, when that subject became very important.

I think that about six months before the end of my three year tour of duty there, I became strongly aware of the opium problem. The American Government itself was becoming increasingly aware of "The Golden Triangle" where opium poppies were being grown. There was just the beginning of the process of refining opium into morphine and heroin there. Most of the opium went out, in those days, from Burma, Laos, and Thailand in the form of raw opium. Opium gum was processed elsewhere. This became an increasing problem because morphine and heroin were coming into the United States, even then, from all over the place. I suggested, and received instructions back from Washington to do so, that I should brace Gen Ne Win then the President and Prime Minister of Burma about this problem. This was the first time that anyone at my level had talked to Gen Ne Win about this matter as a serious interest of the United States. This, of course, became one of our major interests, as the years went by. I would like to think that I should receive a little bit of credit for beginning the high level dialogue with Burma on this subject.

One reason that this dialogue took hold with Gen Ne Win was because he discovered-I think that it was shortly after I left Burma-that his son was a heroin addict. That piqued his interest in a major way. Then, of course, we began a substantial program of supplying helicopters and other aid to the Burmese to help to suppress the opium trade. That's a long answer to a short question. Our major interest turned out to be narcotics.

Q: Well, this is a major question. On your side, in the Embassy, you were dealing with a very reclusive government. I guess that you were under lots of restrictions there. How did the opium problem come to your attention? Was it from sources "outside" of the country, saying that there was a lot of opium coming out of Burma, or were you also getting this information from within Burma?

HUMMEL: We were getting the information from both sources. Our intelligence people were getting increasing reports of the opium trafficking, and I received information from my own, Burmese contacts that there was a steadily increasing amount of poppy cultivation in the area nearest to China. This area was out of Burmese Government control.

Q: What was the attitude of the Burmese you were talking to about this? Did they see this as an opportunity to make money from Westerners addicted [to opium]?

HUMMEL: People in Rangoon were concerned about it for their own, domestic reasons, because they could see the beginnings of addiction in their own country.

Q: Was there also a concern, or did it come later, over the fact that the money [derived from opium trafficking] created more or less independent "warlords?"

HUMMEL: Precisely. The insurgents, who were both ethnic and political, were using opium as a means of supporting themselves. During the Cultural Revolution in China...

Q: Excuse me. Could you give me the dates [of the "Cultural Revolution"]?

HUMMEL: This was somewhere around 1966 to 1976, between my two tours in Burma. By the time I went back to Burma as Ambassador, all of this had already happened. The Cultural Revolution spilled over into Burma in the same way that it did in Sri Lanka, Nepal, Hong Kong, and other places where, believe it or not, Chinese youngsters and students-and also older people-were stimulated by Beijing propaganda to try to get everybody in the world to wear "Mao Zedong" buttons and to acknowledge Chairman Mao as the leader of everything. This resulted in anti-Chinese riots in quite a few places, including Hong Kong and Burma, in particular, where the Chinese community had a very bad time. Chinese shops all over Burma were burned down. Some people were killed, and a lot of ethnic Chinese were run out of town.

The Chinese Government in Beijing was so annoyed that they established, right next to China and within Burmese territory, a brand new area of Burma Communist Party insurgents. Up to this time the Burmese Government had done an excellent job of maintaining basic peace with the ethnic insurgents-the Kachins, the Shans, and the Karens, who had traditionally been restive under...

Q: These were "Montagnard" groups, often away from the major cities. Is that right?

HUMMEL: Yes. They were in the Northeast part of the country. They were not necessarily "Montagnards," though. A number of these ethnic groups-the Shans and most of the Karens-were lowland rice farmers, and few were supporters of Mao Zedong. Anyway, the Burmese Government had done an excellent job of whittling away at the Burma Communist Party, which occupied a small range of hills next to the Irrawaddy River in central Burma. The Party had its own cultural revolution. They were killing each other off over doctrinal disputes and were reduced to almost nothing. The Communist insurgency, in other words, had virtually been beaten. However, when the Chinese Communists set up their new system, it enabled some of the Burma Communist Party leaders to flee to the Chinese border. They went into China, in many cases. They established this brand new insurgency, which still exists in some form to this day, although the Chinese Communists now claim that they're not supporting it any more. Of course, they don't do much about preventing the maintenance of a kind of safe haven for these BCP remnants.

I think that the Chinese Communists now are probably doing a pretty good job of not cooperating with the Burma Communist Party, now that they're promoting really lively trade all along the border with Burma. They're somewhat ashamed of their support for the BCP, a fairly unsavory group which maintains itself by growing opium. They've cut back almost entirely on their support for this insurgent group.

Q: When you were there, Communist China was really "the enemy," wasn't it?

HUMMEL: Yes.

Q: How did we see China as it dealt with the Burma situation, during the period that you were in Burma?

HUMMEL: This was part of an almost worldwide promotion of national liberation movements. If you recall, Zhou En-lai toured Africa, proclaiming publicly in the capitals of the various governments that China supported the insurgents who were outside the capitals. This was an astonishingly stupid performance. The Chinese Communists had a "Pan-Thai Movement" going, with a radio, supporting people of the Thai language and cultural group, including people in Laos and Thailand, particularly. In Eastern Burma the Shan ethnic group is actually Thai. So the Chinese Communists were going through a phase of expansionism and support for what they called "national liberation movements." We saw this as contrary to our own interests and also to the interests of all of our friends.

Q: Were you able to talk to the Burmese and say, "Look, the Chinese are trying to 'screw you up.' It's against our interests and your interests. Can we get together on this?"

HUMMEL: Yes. We did try to talk to the Burmese. That's right. The Burmese stubbornly held to this idea-and it probably was correct, from their parochial point of view and particularly from the point of view of Gen. Ne Win, that they had to maintain, under all circumstances, decent relations with China. So they never really confronted China over this well-known support for the BCP insurgents.

Q: Could you talk a bit about how we viewed the government of Ne Win and how we dealt with it, both in political and economic terms? What was the situation? We're talking about the period from 1968 to 1971.

HUMMEL: Well, I guess that we just sort of tolerated the relationship. To go back a bit, talking about predecessors, my immediate predecessor was Ambassador Henry Byroade.

One of Hank Byroade's great talents was to figure out ways to develop close, personal relationships with heads of state and government. Later on, he went to Pakistan, where I again succeeded him as Ambassador. In Pakistan Byroade used to have an extremely close relationship with the late Mohammed Ali Bhutto, who was Prime Minister later on. Byroade had the same kind of personal relations with Ne Win. He used these relationships in his own way to promote American interests and to try and stiffen the Burmese spine against the Chinese Communists. During Byroade's time in Burma the matter of opium production was not a major issue in bilateral Burmese-American relations.

I had fairly decent personal relations with Ne Win. I also knew his wife, Kitty, very well. She was his wife when I was in Burma the first time, in the late 1950's, rather than when I was there as Ambassador. She had meanwhile died, and he had another wife. Anyway, our personal relations were cordial, but it was impossible-for me, anyway-to alert the Burmese sufficiently to the dangers of cooperation with or clinging to the facade of friendship with the Chinese Communist Government. However, as I said earlier, this may have been a wise course of action for the Burmese, because they actually did not have the military means to confront China. If China had turned up the heat by encouraging the Shan State insurgents on the Burma-Chinese border, the Burmese Army couldn't have handled the resulting situation.

Q: And the Chinese Communists were going through a really militant, almost "know nothing" type stage.

HUMMEL: Exactly.

Q: So this was at the height of [their period of "madness"]. Did the Burmese indicate to you that they thought that the Chinese were really "going off the deep end" on various issues? Even though they had to deal with the Chinese Communists, did they have a pretty good view of what was going on in China?

HUMMEL: I don't think so. They knew that very strange things were going on. However, after all, the Burmese had just been through very strange things in their own country. When Ne Win's "coup d'etat" occurred in 1962, the Burmese had literally, as Left socialists allied with the military, decided to abolish all private enterprise, including little "tea shops" and cigarette stands along the road. The State was going to take care of everything. It was an extraordinarily stupid series of actions which the Burmese themselves had gone through. So when they saw Cultural Revolution type things going on in China, they...

Q: This was just an episode.

HUMMEL: Right. And they hoped and, I think, expected that it would be temporary and that things eventually would calm down, as eventually they did.

Q: How did we regard the internal political and economic situation [in Burma] when you were there at this time? This was some six years after the initial Ne Win coup d'etat.

HUMMEL: Things were obviously going downhill, again, because of unworkable Left Socialist notions, although they were not as extreme as in Communist China. By the time I arrived in Burma in 1968, they had begun to loosen up on things that obviously shouldn't have been tried, because the government clearly wasn't able to supply what the people wanted or needed.

Q: Where were they getting the "intellectual vigor" for this? Where were Ne Win and his group getting this "Left Socialist" outlook?

HUMMEL: There were socialists and, I think, there was a strong tinge of communism-mostly from people educated in Britain.

Q: I have my own view-it's almost a thesis. I've never served in Britain. But particularly in Africa, India, and these other areas I think that, sometimes, the Fabian Socialists and their ilk and their successors probably did more damage to the world economy than the Communists did.

HUMMEL: I think so. I think that you can still see reflections of this in India.

Q: Did we "tout" the advantages of competition, capitalism, and all that, or is this just a...

HUMMEL: Well, we tried, but it fell on deaf ears. Obviously, the Burmese Government wasn't going to pay any attention whatever. We managed to keep a USIS program going, with a very well patronized library. Probably the best library and cultural center in Rangoon. Also, we maintained an outpost in Mandalay, with a USIS library and consular as well as USIS personnel.

Q: Was English still sort of the language of the intellectuals?

HUMMEL: Yes. English was diminishing, partly because the educational system was falling apart. The Burmese Government had to close down the principal university every now and then because of subversive elements in it, as the government saw it. The emphasis on English in the lower grades deteriorated, the way it has in many former British colonies.

Q: Each year, I guess in the summer, before the UN General Assembly meeting in September, a long "shopping list" is sent out to every post, asking our Embassies to persuade the government to which they are accredited to vote for a number of issues. I am sure that you have received this shopping list. Was this an exercise in futility? Were you able to make any progress?

HUMMEL: It was mostly futile, in terms of direct results in voting patterns. However, I always enjoyed this. I would farm this out to the Political Officers and others to go over and discuss the list with Foreign Ministry officials. The Political Officers had good personal relations with individuals in the Foreign Ministry.

We didn't change the Burmese minds. At one of the East Asian Chiefs of Mission conferences in Baguio, when I was asked to say a few words about the Burmese situation, I said that the Burmese are so "non-aligned" that they won't even join the "Non-Aligned Movement." That was literally true. They did not wish to vote on any Cold War issues, in the UN or anywhere else.

Q: So much of the "Non-Aligned Movement" was basically anti-U. S.?

HUMMEL: That's the principal reason why the Burmese didn't want to join it. They saw that it was a sham, not a non-alignment.

Q: How about Ne Win and your relations with him? I have understood from other people who have dealt with Burma that probably the most important thing if you go there is to be pretty good at golf. I understand that it really is an entree, particularly with the Burmese military. I noticed the same thing in Korea. I used to take 140 strokes to go around an 18 hole course with some of the generals. This was very embarrassing.

HUMMEL: You're quite right. I was delinquent. You might almost say selfish, because I had another interest-hunting. There was a golf course five minutes up the road from my house. I should have started golf. As I said previously, my wife gave me a set of clubs. I went out once or twice with a golf pro-all extremely cheap and easy. However, I preferred to go off with Burmese into the jungle in my spare time and hunt. I think that I talked a little about that in terms of my first tour in Burma. I was able to hunt during my second tour in Burma as well. I liked trying to be the only "white face" in the whole crowd and speak Burmese with everybody, go far away, make a base out in the jungle, and then walk from there-tracking big game and beating for deer, birds, and so forth. So I had another interest that took me away from golf.

Q: It's important to have some kind of interest [outside the office] that...

HUMMEL: Relates to the local culture. When I was hunting, I was dealing with lower level people but I got an insight into what the farmers' problems were and what the local population was concerned about. I got a special insight and walked through opium poppy fields which they the government really didn't want me to see at all, of course, because they didn't know whether I'd pinpoint the location. I never reported any of this because it would have been such a pinprick and would have spoiled my entree to these Burmese.

Q: What about Ne Win? Was he difficult to see? How was he as far as dealing with him?

HUMMEL: He was not easy to see. You had to explain why you wanted to see him, instead of going to the Foreign Ministry. However, I never felt that I was getting the stiff arm. It was just the way Ne Win was. He was very unsure of himself. He knew that he had made bad mistakes in connection with the Burmese way to Socialism. He knew that things were not going well. The country was subsisting but experiencing shortages of things like medicines and spare parts. These were available on the black market, which brought many essential imports in from Thailand, in a fairly open way. And this was officially tolerated by the government, because the government really couldn't supply these products through its own channels. The holes and defects in this intellectual carnival, with the state theoretically but not actually supplying everything to everybody, was showing up. The farmers, because there wasn't enough to buy, didn't work very hard and didn't produce the rice that the country wanted them to do. There were virtually no exports of rice at that time. Their fiscal situation was in bad shape because of their own policies. And Ne Win knew this.

Q: Did any other country's ambassador have better access to Ne Win than you did?

HUMMEL: I don't know of any Ambassador who was close to Ne Win personally. But I think that the Yugoslavs were close to the government officials who mattered. Also, to a considerable extent, the Israelis. Both the Yugoslav and the Israeli Embassies were staffed with very astute people who got along well with the Burmese.

Q: The Yugoslavs had a unique position, in that they were sort of outside both "camps."

HUMMEL: They were socialists and so were persona grata to the Burmese, as opposed to capitalists. The Yugoslavs profess to be able to explain the socialist world, including China. They would discuss what they knew about China. I couldn't do that.

Q: The Yugoslavs consider China as a major source of news. I served five years in Yugoslavia a little before this. I left in 1967. I know that the Yugoslavs had a good Foreign Service, and they had an almost unique position in China. They could get around [at that time and were not] overly "tainted."

Well, were there any major problems that developed when you were in Burma-apart from the growing, narcotics problem?

HUMMEL: We had a couple of personnel screw ups-unsuitable people assigned to the Embassy, plus one intelligence screw up which I would have stopped if I had known of it in time. I won't go into the details. But fundamentally, there were no special problems.

Q: I wonder if you could talk about these personnel problems without identifying the individuals. The people who read these interviews in the future would like to get some impression of what an Ambassador does and some of the problems involved in running an Embassy, as well as "policy" matters. What constitutes a "personnel" problem?

HUMMEL: These would be the same kind of thing that you would find in any middle class or suburban environment-alcoholism and incompatible families, wives and husbands bickering which spill over into relationships in the office. I can't recall any acute problems in this area, involving any battered wives, although that came up during my second tour in Burma.

During my first tour in the late 1950's Burma was such an adventure. The country was so wide open, and everybody loved it. We had beautiful parties where we'd set up gambling games-before Ne Win outlawed the whole thing. We were "in" with anyone who mattered in Burma during my first tour there.

During my second tour the austerity campaign had set in. Many of my best Burmese friends were in detention. I should have said this earlier. After Ne Win took over power in 1962, he detained everybody who was anybody who might oppose his policies. Many of these detainees didn't get out until 1967 or 1968, when I arrived for my second tour in Burma. When they did get out, many of them left the country. Some went to Bangkok and started to plot an overthrow of the Burmese Government which, of course, never came to anything. However, even on the second time around there was the lure of a feeling that we were out there in a somewhat primitive but in many ways attractive country. There was plenty to do, and you could travel a great deal. As I said, you could choose your places where there were no insurgents. I could travel on hunting trips, for instance, and stay out in the jungle. People who wanted to go to Mandalay, Pagan, and all the sightseeing places could do so. We had two beach houses that the Embassy owned at a very lovely place facing toward the coast of India at Sandoway.

We had a rudimentary American school, but it seemed to be adequate to meet the needs of Embassy staff members who had young children. Our two boys had to leave because they went beyond the top level of the American School system there. During the last year of our stay there, they were back here in the United States in boarding school.

Q: As a sociological note, was alcoholism a problem in the Foreign Service at this time? I think that by now we have become much more aware of it. We knew what alcoholism was but didn't do much about it. Were we doing much about it at this time? If you had someone who appeared to be drinking to excess and was creating a problem, how did we deal with that?

HUMMEL: Eventually, we'd find a way to talk directly to the person. We didn't have a resident, Embassy doctor, because the official family wasn't large enough to support one. We had a resident nurse. There was a roving State Department doctor. I forget where he lived-probably Bangkok. We would ask him to talk to the person who was drinking too much. If his or her work was really being seriously affected, we quietly sent them home. I don't recall that we had as aggressive a treatment program as we have now. Now, I think it's a very good system. You don't really penalize people until they flunk out of the treatment program, but you give them a warning.

Q: How about the Vietnam War? It was going strong, and our efforts there were at their peak during your period of duty in Burma as Ambassador. The war was taking place in the same geographic area as Burma. How did this "play" with the Burmese?

HUMMEL: Strangely enough, the Burmese were so isolated that they didn't feel involved or very much threatened. I think that they were glad that we were preventing the Vietnamese Communists from taking over everything in Southeast Asia. It was quite obvious then, and you can see how things have gone now, that the major thrust of Vietnamese foreign policy was to take over Laos and Cambodia. They had always felt that Indochina was theirs. They abandoned that national goal, some time after we withdrew from South Vietnam. First, they used their surrogates to topple the Cambodian Government. Pol Pot, the Cambodian communist leader promptly turned his coat, as far as the Vietnamese were concerned.

Anyway, I think that the Burmese saw the danger of a very wide-ranging Vietnamese desire to run things in the whole Indochina peninsula. But the Burmese weren't doing anything about it, and they were astonishingly insulated from it. I was so fascinated with what was going on over there that I made several trips on my own-at least two trips to Laos, where Ambassador Mac Godley was running the air strikes. We had Thai volunteers organized into special units. It was an amazing kind of warfare, with artillery strong points scattered all over Laos, supplied by air, in an effort to counter the Vietnamese, essentially, because the Lao Army wasn't able to do much. I also visited Saigon. But we in Burma were not really involved in this.

Q: Ne Win, of course, came out of the Burmese Army. How would you characterize the Burmese Army, particularly the officer corps, during the time that you were there as Ambassador?

HUMMEL: They had a layer of fairly well educated people who knew the outside world-lieutenant colonels and colonels, I would say, because they didn't have particularly high ranking generals. The intelligence chief and the people who ran security were basically military oriented, even in the case of the civilian security organization. But as far as the rest of them were concerned, their education was basically rather shallow. They had swallowed the Left Socialist doctrine that the government could supply everything better than any other system. They hated the idea and actually tramped on any proposal to enlarge the private sector or make use of market forces. They would have called this capitalism. They didn't know what to do about the insurgency. Basically, they were not a well-educated group.

Q: Were they treated well? Did they feel the impact of the failing economy?

HUMMEL: No. That's the point that I should have started with, I guess. They had their own system of PX's, post exchanges, housing, and perks-cars and drivers, right down to the families of serving foot soldiers. These soldiers were treated in a special way. They were, you could say, fat and happy. However, Burmese society as a whole is a strange one, in that the people know how to get along by tightening their belts. One of the first things that they do when times get bad is to give less and less to the monasteries and pagodas. A very attractive feature of this society was their genuine practice of living the teachings of Theravada Buddhism. In economic terms they would simply give less to the monasteries and pagodas and would cut down on the magnificence of wedding and funeral ceremonies.

The climate is mild. There is plenty of land for anyone who wants to go out into the jungle and clear it. That is still true. The population had not outstripped available, arable land. As I said, the incentive for doing more agriculturally and in entrepreneurial terms was very small because there was very little that you could buy that anybody needed. The Burmese knew how to get along with less. That's very attractive.

Q: You left Burma in 1971 and came back to Washington. You came back to...

HUMMEL: I came back to an unsatisfactory situation from my point of view. I forget the exact year, but meanwhile I had become a full-fledged, Foreign Service Officer, FSO. I had sort of slipped out of USIA-I forget the year. Marshall Green was the Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of East Asian Affairs. I heard later that Marshall didn't realize that I was an FSO and thought that I was still one of those outsiders which USIA had foisted upon him. At the beginning, this was sort of true.

Anyway, I wound up as the head of an office for negotiating their future status with the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands-the TTPI. I was rushed back from Burma. I came back briefly for an interview with the ambassadorial level negotiator, a man named Hayden Williams, who was the head of the Asia Foundation in San Francisco. He decided that he wanted me to be in charge of this office, so I was rushed back to Washington. Betty Lou had to pack up in Rangoon and leave. We had two, half-grown tiger cubs that we had raised in the house. We sent them over to the Rangoon Zoo. Having the tiger cubs was a great experience.

When our sons left Burma to come back to prep school, we latched onto a couple of tiger cubs that were being sold. We had already had two tiger cubs before, during my previous tour in Rangoon. They are great playmates, and we really enjoyed them.

Anyway, I left Burma quickly and immediately discovered that the Trust Territory operation had no money. It was Congressman Wayne Hayes, for some reason that I cannot recall, who prohibited the State Department from spending any money on this office. So we had to get money from the Defense Department, which was intimately involved in this matter because it wanted to maintain base and territorial rights, and the Department of the Interior, which had been involved in the administration of the TTPI for many years.

I had no people assigned to the office, so I had to recruit everybody and find office space. The deadline was that we had a brand new set of instructions, which was why this office had been set up, and a negotiating meeting in three months. This was the first, sensible set of instructions for trying to negotiate what eventually turned out to be a kind of "free association" between these islands and the United States, meaning that we had control over their foreign affairs and defense. Otherwise, they were internally self-governing, except that our huge subsidies would still continue. This continues to be the case. Our subsidies have completely spoiled the culture of many of these islands. I don't know if you've ever been there.

Q: Yes. In May, 1994, I visited Ponape. They are lovely people, but there is a great deal of alcoholism.

HUMMEL: They are paid too much. They are paid on an American scale.

Q: You know that this situation isn't going to last. It's going to fall apart.

HUMMEL: Nearly everybody, or at least half of the population, has a U. S. Government subsidy. It's not welfare, either. It's being part of the government-employed as bureaucrats.

Q: Obviously, at a certain point the money will run out. How long did you deal with this negotiation?

HUMMEL: I managed to escape toward the end of February, 1972. I started in on this new job in State in July, 1971, just about the time that President Nixon was already in China on his famous trip. I managed to get back into the State Department as a Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of East Asian Affairs.

Once again, this was just plain luck. James C. Wilson, a very good Foreign Service Officer, had a heart attack and couldn't handle the job any longer. The Department was looking for a replacement. So his bad luck was my good luck.

Q: I'd like to go back to the TTPI negotiations first. How did you find working with the Pentagon on this matter? I'm told that when it's a question of negotiating between the Department of State and the Department of Defense on giving up base rights (Okinawa is the major example.), dealing with the Soviet Union or the People's Republic of China is much simpler. You understand that you have to make some concessions. Did you find this...?

HUMMEL: Absolutely. You've got it exactly right. As an illustration, when I was recruiting staff for this office, I had in mind a Foreign Service Officer to be my deputy. Mel Laird, then Secretary of Defense, summoned me and Hayden Williams to his office. Williams was in Washington only occasionally. He was based in San Francisco but was in charge of our operation and was the ambassadorial negotiator. Secretary Laird looked me in the eye and said, I understand that you want to have a Foreign Service Officer as your deputy. You're not going to have that. I'm going to insist that you have a military officer. Well, I was starting to say a few words in rebuttal. He cut me off and said, "If necessary, I'm going to the President over this. You can't do this." So Hayden and I backed off, although this was an empty threat. Laird would never have gone to the President over a small matter like who was going to be my deputy. I had the distinction then of resisting having in my office, as my deputy, then Navy Captain William Crowe later Admiral Crowe who was absolutely top quality. He was later the best Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff that we ever had.

Q: I served with him in Naples. I was Consul General, and he was commander of the Sixth Fleet and probably the one person in the military with whom you could have worked and who would have understood the situation.

HUMMEL: He was really a gem-and still is. Furthermore, it turned out that the State guy I had in mind was a secret alcoholic. So Mel Laird was right, and the Pentagon was right, too, as a matter of fact. I should never have attempted to have a non military deputy because there was this suspicion among the military that you were talking about. The Pentagon was always afraid that we in the State Department would not negotiate hard enough for what they felt were-and I agreed with them-major needs on our part. We had to build a relationship with the TTPI while we had the leverage as the trustees of the Trust Territory. We had to build and negotiate a relationship with the TTPI so that we could preclude the Soviets from moving in.

Q: This is the policy of "deniability"-not so much to establish bases, since we had several [in the TTPI]. We needed to make sure that the Soviets didn't come "fishing in these troubled waters" and obtain bases [of their own] in the area.

HUMMEL: As you recall, they very nearly did persuade Tonga to open up a huge port for Soviet intelligence. We managed to prevent that. Anyway, the Soviet objectives were quite clearly expansionist in this sense. So the Pentagon really had a very strong and legitimate interest in the whole matter.

Q: Had this office gone very far during this period from July, 1971, to early 1972? Was your job mainly to "set things up"?

HUMMEL: As I said, we had a three-months' deadline before we had to meet for the first time with the Micronesian delegation. The meeting was held in Hawaii at a very nice hotel on the island of Maui-sort of half way between Washington and the Trust Territory. We began the lengthy process which just culminated a year or so ago.

Q: I understand from an interview with Peter Rosenblatt and other people involved with this matter later on that you weren't negotiating with the Micronesians so much as with Washington lawyers.

HUMMEL: Yes, that was true. When Paul Warnke and his staff became Counsel for the TTPI delegation and their so-called Parliament, this added a new dimension. There were also well-meaning but, I think, rather extreme Peace Corps lawyers who went out to the Trust Territory under a Peace Corps flag, as well as a domestic program which provided lawyers for poor people. I forget the name of that program, but some of those lawyers also wound up in the TTPI. They were incensed that we did not wish to let these people become totally independent, whereas we were trying to push for residual control by the United States over defense and foreign affairs.

Q: Of course, we're talking about a time when [views like these] were all coming out of the anti-Vietnam War movement anyway. People who would display such attitudes were usually what you might call "peace activists."

HUMMEL: To do them justice, the loyalty of these lawyers had to be to their clients. In that sense they should have, and did, supported what they thought was best for their clients and also what their clients wanted them to do.

Q: Were their clients, in other words, the people of the TTPI, looking for full independence or were they trying to get as much money as they could out of the United States?

HUMMEL: Both. They wanted independence and continued subsidies from the United States. One of our points of leverage was to say, "You can't have both. It won't work. Our Congress won't permit it."

Q: Then you moved over to the State Department. Here you had been speaking Chinese almost from birth. You had been floating around the periphery [of Chinese affairs in the State Department] for some time. We had the Nixon-Kissinger "opening" to [Mainland] China. And you had the "tag" of a "China hand." How did this work out? You replaced Jim Wilson, who had had a heart attack. The Department called you in to do what?

HUMMEL: Let's see. First of all, Bill Sullivan was still in the Bureau of East Asian Affairs as a Deputy Assistant Secretary, as I recall. He left shortly thereafter in 1972 to go to Laos as Ambassador. He had been the principal deputy to Marshall Green. We floated around for a while without quite knowing who was the principal deputy, but I eventually wound up in that position.

Since I did not pretend to be a Japan hand, although I had been stationed there in Tokyo for two years, there was another Deputy Assistant Secretary, Dick Sneider, who covered Japan and Korea. My area covered China and Oceania, which included Australia and New Zealand. We had another Deputy Assistant Secretary for Southeast Asia.

Q: Just to get the dates straightened out, you were in the Bureau [of East Asian Affairs as a Deputy Assistant Secretary] from 1972 to...

HUMMEL: 1975.

Q: Now, the Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs was Marshall Green.

HUMMEL: Right.

Q: How did he run his office?

HUMMEL: He's very astute, very smart, and very self-centered. The latter feature didn't show in any obnoxious way, but I guess that the aspect which bugged us the most was that Marshall would wait until the end of the day-like 6:00 or 7:00 PM-to go through the outgoing telegrams which he had to sign off on. That meant that the rest of us also had to stay there, in case he had some reason for changing a telegram around. This drove everybody up the wall.

Q: I spent my career as a consular officer. [In that capacity] you start in early in the morning. You sit down in your office and plow through your work. By quitting time [in the afternoon] you are exhausted, you have done your work, and you have cleared your desk. You had to [do things this way].

HUMMEL: And then all of the telegrams would come to you.

Q: But we could deal with the telegrams the next day. I often found that in the Political Section [of an Embassy] the day would start very slowly, with [the various officers] reading the newspapers and so forth. Then they would go out to have a long, business lunch. When they returned from lunch, all of a sudden, they would "move into high gear." It was a wholly different way of spending the day. [What you are describing] suggests that you had the same pattern [as a Political Section] to the "nth" degree.

HUMMEL: Yes. The fact is that during the day Marshall Green could have begun to go through the outgoing telegrams. However, he would generally leave the more important telegrams till last. He got along very well with Congress. He did not get along well with Henry Kissinger then National Security Adviser to the President. He got along well with Secretary of State Rogers, who was unfortunately something of a nonentity in any case and was, of course, completely overshadowed by Kissinger and Nixon in foreign affairs.

Marshall Green left the job of Assistant Secretary of the Bureau to become Ambassador to Indonesia, leaving me as Acting Assistant Secretary. I'm sorry but I don't remember the exact date. You can find that later. I think that it was toward the end of 1972. Meanwhile, I had acquired the confidence of Henry Kissinger and his people in dealing with Mainland China.

At this point Henry Kissinger was still National Security Adviser to the President. He had his own China people-John Holdridge was still there on the National Security Council staff. Anyway, I was the highest ranking person in the State Department who dealt with Henry Kissinger on China-let's put it that way. I got close in to Kissinger and his coterie at that time- Larry Eagleburger, Peter Rodman, and Win Lord-when Henry was over at the National Security Council. I guess that they discovered that I didn't leak or gossip and that I would generally do what I was told.

Q: Did you have a feeling that our China policy at that time was essentially being run out of the National Security Council?

HUMMEL: Oh, yes, very much so. After Marshall Green left, I was Acting Assistant Secretary for more than a year-maybe almost two years. If you recall, there was an attempt to make Ambassador Mac Godley, a Foreign Service Officer and recently Ambassador to Laos, Assistant Secretary. That attempt failed because of Congressional opposition, apparently largely because he had been running the air strikes during the war in Laos. This was regarded as a black mark against him. So for a time there, Mac Godley was sitting in the office but couldn't act officially as Assistant Secretary, of course. I was doing my best to bring him up to speed. This may sound arrogant, suggesting that I was trying to teach him the job. However, he and I are still close friends.

Then the Department drafted the then Ambassador to Japan, Bob Ingersoll, to be Assistant Secretary in the EA Bureau. He was in charge of the EA Bureau, but only for a few months.

Q: Where did he come from-the labor movement?

HUMMEL: No. He had a big business background-Borg-Warner and automatic transmissions for automobiles in particular. A very nice man.

Q: This sounds like Henry Kissinger and President Nixon wanting to avoid having too powerful a figure in the State Department.

HUMMEL: You're absolutely right. Furthermore, they made a bad mistake in taking him out of the EA Bureau and making him Deputy Secretary of the whole Department, putting me in again as Acting Assistant Secretary. Ingersoll wasn't up to being Deputy Secretary. He was trotting around, attending meetings with Henry Kissinger whenever he could, but there was no real prospect of his being able to act fully for Henry when he was on a trip. I mean, Henry always carried his own office with him, wherever he went.

This was an exhilarating period for me. I learned to like Henry Kissinger, even though he treated us all abominably. I've seen Larry Eagleburger come out of Henry's office in tears because of the way Henry had reamed him out. At times Henry would just go wild over some issue or another.

Q: Well, you can treat almost as a joke somebody who can "go wild." But sometimes you don't. How did you handle this?

HUMMEL: You are always on a kind of knife edge. I found the fact that Henry now likes to pretend that I was the only one who ever talked back to him rather silly. He would say this when he would visit me in Beijing and would address the whole staff at the Embassy. This is not true. He would say that I was mean to him, which is, of course, ludicrous. However, it is true that when the two of us were together, or with only Larry Eagleburger or Win Lord there, in his office, and I objected to something that he was about to do, I would shout back at him. I would say, Henry, I'll do it if you want me to, but I want you to listen. Please listen, and then you make your final decision. I really would talk like that-but never before an outside audience.

Q: Are we talking about his ego?

HUMMEL: Yes, we are. However, unfortunately, the SOB is so damned bright that, as I look back on these episodes, he was usually right.

Q: One of the things that I get in these interviews is that when Kissinger focused on something, it was fine, and he really knew the subject. However, on peripheral issues involving Africa, Latin America, or Cyprus he would get involved and didn't really know the subject. But he would think that he knew it. I would think that, with regard to China, he really wasn't a "China expert" but was seen as merely playing the "China card" and all of that. How did you find him? Was he knowledgeable about what was making China tick?

HUMMEL: I had no problem with him on this. He really was a very quick learner. I think that maybe he expected a little bit more from China than he got. However, this was not a fatal defect, and he was properly cynical about it. He knew that Mao Zedong was fading. I remember that he came back after having seen Mao in Beijing, exclaiming to a very small group of us, "This man is a monster. He is holding himself together by sheer will power. He has a bad case of Parkinson's Disease and can barely stand up. He mumbles so badly that the interpreters have trouble hearing him. Yet there he is. He's a monster." I remember Henry saying that he had appropriate skepticism about him. However, Henry diagnosed American interests very nicely.

Q: Well, you were really "the" China expert in the State Department at that time. This was really the "honeymoon" period of relations with China, from 1972 to 1975. What did we see in China and what were we trying to do, from your point of view?

HUMMEL: We did not see the scope and the importance of the Cultural Revolution. I have to say that. We knew that the Cultural Revolution was going on and we knew that bad things were happening to people all over the country. We were not blind to that. However, we didn't grasp fully the scope and importance of this extraordinarily, negatively transforming experience of the Chinese.

For example, the Lin Piao affair. He was supposed to be the number two man after Mao. He died in a plane crash, allegedly flying to-well, nobody knows yet exactly what happened. Allegedly, he was flying away after an attempted coup d'etat against Mao, but nobody knows the facts.

I took two trips with Henry to China. During one of these trips I sat in on one of the most extraordinary conversations between Henry and Zhou En-lai-two equal intellects. It was very, very fascinating-extraordinarily fascinating. They were talking about the whole world.

I helped to organize the establishment of the U. S. Liaison Office, which was suggested by the Chinese during one of these trips. We had no diplomatic relations with China and no diplomatic recognition, yet we established a form of diplomatic relations. It was a very interesting gimmick that the Chinese and we concocted. In 1973 they sent Chinese officials here, and we sent Americans there.

Q: Where did that idea come from?

HUMMEL: It had been one of a series of conceivable options in study papers dating back to several years before. However, nobody thought that the Chinese Communists would agree, as long as we had an Embassy in Taipei. The Chinese Communists themselves brought up this idea, during Kissinger's trip to Mainland China in 1972. By 1973 we had the liaison offices up and going. However, the logistics were very complex. Regarding their liaison office in Washington, they initially moved into the Mayflower Hotel. Then they bought this building where they are now ensconced the former Windsor Park Hotel.

As Acting Assistant Secretary, I was in charge of giving the welcoming dinners-first, for the advance party. I gave a small dinner at the Cosmos Club and then a large dinner on the eighth floor of the State Department when the ambassadorial level person came to Washington-Ambassador Huang Zhen.

My wife deserves the credit for discovering a horrible faux pas on the part of our protocol people. There were two flags on display at the dinner on the eighth floor of the Department, which was preceded by cocktails. We arrived early, and my wife went over to the two national flags and examined what should be the PRC flag and saw that it had a hammer and sickle on it; it was the Soviet flag. So we quickly banished the flags before anybody arrived, and had no flags. Nobody noticed. I shouldn't have told anybody about this, but I guess that I mentioned this incident to Larry Eagleburger afterwards. He told Henry. Typically, Henry wanted to fire the whole Protocol Department, he was so incensed at this stupid error.

Shortly thereafter, Phil Habib was named Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs. He was a great guy and a wonderful choice. He landed running, and I didn't have to do much to teach him anything. I was very close to him and was still his principal deputy. However, I got tired of being a perennial, principal deputy, so I volunteered to go to Ethiopia as Ambassador. This was how that assignment came up.

Q: You'd been to Ethiopia with the National War College, hadn't you?

HUMMEL: Yes.

Q: Well, let's stick with the Far East for the moment. Could you talk a little about your work with Dick Sneider? He was my Ambassador in South Korea and he was a real "Japan hand." I don't remember the dates, but had the reversion of Okinawa taken place by this time?

HUMMEL: Yes. Dick was involved in this issue most of the time and for a long period. He was one of the Deputy Assistant Secretaries in the East Asian Bureau. He spent almost all of his time on the Okinawa reversion issue and did a very good job of it-again, negotiating some very hard issues with the Pentagon.

Q: What was your impression as the Acting Assistant Secretary of our relations with Japan at the time? Was this pretty much turned over to the Deputy Assistant Secretary handling relations with Japan? Did you get involved?

HUMMEL: Not terribly actively, no. The beginnings of our trade imbalance had begun to show. I remember the figure of a \$9.0 billion trade deficit on our side. In those days it was substantial, even when compared to our trade deficit now. I remember talking with Henry and others about it. I think it may have been William Casey, who was Under Secretary for Economic Affairs.

Q: William Casey, later Director of the CIA.

HUMMEL: Yes. Anyway, we were talking about the sad fact that the Japanese were not doing what they said they were going to do to keep their markets open. The popular wisdom then-and I think that it still is now-was that many of our industrial patents and processes were licensed to the Japanese for far less than we should have gotten them to pay. This enabled them to get their industries started, and we could see the burgeoning trade deficit that we had with them.

Well, Phil Habib came in as Assistant Secretary and was also and immediately very close to Henry. Henry had great confidence in him. Otherwise, he wouldn't have let him be Assistant Secretary.

Q: By that time Kissinger had moved over to the State Department and become Secretary of State. How did you feel about our policy toward Communist China at that time? There was a lot of optimism at the time, and this is a perennial issue going back to the novel of the 1920's, "Oil for the Lamps of China." You know, people believed that there was a huge market and used to say that we liked the Chinese and the Chinese liked us.

HUMMEL: I felt that we were too optimistic. I've always been somewhat skeptical about China. Right now the newspapers are full of the fact that China refuses to carry out its agreement on protecting intellectual property rights. We have a kind of confrontation with them now. Regarding that kind of thing, I can easily foresee a strain of arrogance and self satisfaction developing in China, following the stress that will be involved with the death of Deng Xiaoping. I feel that I know more about how the Chinese think than most Americans do. I have had a very intimate relationship with them for many years.

As far as American policy is concerned, I had no problems. I felt that we were doing the right things. It is very tough on our friends in Taiwan, where I had been stationed for three years.

One of the things that I had to do during this period was to negotiate with the Chinese and the French for the removal of Sihanouk's mother from Cambodia to China, where Sihanouk was. This was an extraordinarily complicated and secret thing, making sure that airplanes would do what they were supposed to do, flying between neutral points, and that each side understood the rules. Then we saw the arrangements fall apart and had to put them back together again. This was one of the super secret things that fell on my plate.

Q: What was the issue?

HUMMEL: Just plain logistics. The French, acting as intermediaries for Sihanouk, had gotten the Cambodian Government to agree in principle that this old lady and some of her relatives should be allowed to leave Cambodia. These were Sihanouk's relatives, too, of course. But trying to do this secretly and get all of the pieces put together was quite a trick. I remember being proud of that.

Q: Did things change in terms of your efforts with China when Henry Kissinger became Secretary of State?

HUMMEL: Well, yes, in the sense that I saw him more frequently. However, as far as China affairs were concerned, nothing changed, because I was already his man on China.

Q: How about Winston Lord?

HUMMEL: Winston had no special China experience. He has a Chinese-American wife, Betty Bao. He was not thought to be a China expert. Winston was head of Policy Planning. He seemed to spend most of his time writing and rewriting Henry's public speeches. He was very good at it, too. I can still see him, racing up and down the seventh floor corridor with a legal size pad of paper in his hands, preparing another draft of a speech. I always felt sorry for him, but respected his intelligence..

Q: What about Zhou En-lai? How did we see him at that time? What was your impression of him?

HUMMEL: I think that we had an accurate picture of him. He was a survivor. He had done some bad things in the past, on Mao's orders. He was part of the Great Leap Forward and the persecution of the intellectuals. There was very little that he could do to stop the great excesses of the Cultural Revolution, although he did what he could. The quality of his intellect was so obvious to Henry Kissinger and everybody who had a chance to sit down and talk to him. We had a lot of respect for him. There was no doubt that he had to get Mao's approval for-not everything, but virtually so. He had to be very sure that Mao would approve of everything that he did. He would stay up late at night, looking even at the final texts of the stories in People's Daily, the Communist Party of China daily newspaper. He personally would check over that late, late at night. He was very meticulous. I saw this during the time that we were visiting Beijing. There would be a communique to be issued. He could combine that attention to detail with a very broad and quite extraordinary, sweeping view of geo-strategic thinking. He had an accurate knowledge of events.

Q: When these conversations would take place that you were privy to...

HUMMEL: I was only privy to one.

Q: Well, the one between Kissinger and Zhou En-lai. What sort of things were they talking about?

HUMMEL: They were dealing with a wide-ranging tour d'horizon, covering everything, from conditions in the Soviet Union, to Albania, which was China's friend in Europe, to the world economy. Zhou didn't divulge a great deal about China's economy that we didn't know already, but he covered every subject masterfully. And they both loved it.

Q: What about the so-called "China card" as you saw it and must often have thought about? The idea was that we would try to counter the Soviet Union by having closer relations with Communist China. This meant that the Soviets would have another, external threat facing them, other than just NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization]. How did we view that?

HUMMEL: You've got it. There was another element to it, of course, and that is, during the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia the Soviets invented the Brezhnev Doctrine. This, of course, was an excuse for Soviet intervention in the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia. However, they made a doctrine out of it. The Soviets don't call it the Brezhnev Doctrine. They called it "The Doctrine on Relations Between Socialist States." The Sino-Soviet split had, of course, already occurred. They began threatening China with all sorts of things, including a surgical, nuclear strike against all of China's nuclear program. Victor Louis, the Soviets' tame propagandist in those years, was quite often a vehicle for expressing these views, using the Doctrine.

Q: He was from the Canadian-American Institute or something like that.

HUMMEL: I thought he was supposedly a straight journalist. Then, in 1969, the Soviets and the Chinese Communists had that very serious series of clashes on the border along the Ussuri River. The Brezhnev Doctrine was still fresh in everybody's mind. The Chinese were really concerned that the Soviets might pour across the border into China. The Soviets, of course, were also concerned that hordes of Chinese were going to pour across the Soviet border in the other direction. Tension was very high, and at the time the Chinese had ample reason for concern about the Soviet military, although this all seems trivial now.

Q: So the Chinese Communists were playing the "American card."

HUMMEL: That's right. Plus the fact that there was a continuing buildup of Soviet troops all along the Siberian border with China, a buildup which continued until about 1980.

Q: So the Soviets started the parallel railroad up above [the Trans Siberian railroad].

HUMMEL: Yes. They had announced plans for it and were building parts of it. So, in addition to the fact that you mentioned, you have to add this factor of genuine Chinese fear of a military invasion of China by the Soviet Union. The Chinese had their own reasons for concern.

Another reason for this rapprochement between Communist China and the United States or this exercise in triangular diplomacy, as it came to be called, was that President Nixon wanted to get the U. S. out of the Vietnam War. Having a friendlier relationship with China would enable a U. S. withdrawal from Vietnam, hopefully with some prospect of viability for South Vietnam after we left. Of course, this didn't happen.

So we had the pivotal position in this triangle. We could have acceptable relations with the Soviet Union, and the Chinese Communists resented that very much. The Chinese could not have decent relations with the Soviet Union. The United States could have good relations with both countries-or decent relations, anyway.

At one time-I can't remember the year now-the Chinese Communists publicly accused us of seeking a rapprochement with the Soviet Union, stating that we were "standing on China's shoulders" to get a better relationship with the Soviet Union. This was not too far from the truth.

Q: During your time as Deputy Assistant Secretary and Acting Secretary did the Chinese Communists ever seek any support from us against the Soviet Union?

HUMMEL: Only in very nuance terms. Of course, I don't know what Henry Kissinger told them in those very private conversations. It may be-and I strongly suspect that this was the case-that he went further than the American Government as a whole told him to. Congress would have been incensed if the Executive Branch of our government made firm promises of providing military assistance or entering a war without consultation with Congress. However, we came pretty close to it. We said that we would not stand idly by, that there would be serious repercussions on our relations with the Soviet Union, and that we would try to get other countries involved in taking anti-Soviet positions, if such an event would happen. We said that we would do what we could to help China and so on. Vague statements of this sort were made. I do not know of any specific promises of assistance to China and I really doubt that such promises could have really been made or that the Chinese would have believed them.

Q: When you were making these vague statements that we would not stand idly by, did this involve consultations, discussions, and drafting position papers by the Bureau of East Asian Affairs?

HUMMEL: No. Henry's own staff might have done this, or he might have done it himself, off the cuff. It would not surprise me if he did. At the same time he would carefully explain, "I cannot make firm promises because we do not know what the attitude of the American Congress would be and what the circumstances would be at the time," and so forth. That's the way he would handle it.

Q: You were working on China affairs. We were opening up relations with Communist China. Taiwan was beginning to move to the periphery. At one point there was a very strong "China Lobby" in Washington, which was a force to be reckoned with. How were your relations with Congress at this time?

HUMMEL: At that time they were pretty good. There were some diehards, such as former Congressman Walter Judd, also a former medical missionary in China of "China Lobby" fame, Ray Cline, a former CIA officer who made a lot of his income from Taiwan, after he retired. They would keep up a drumfire of criticism that we had too close relations with the Chinese Communists and had abandoned our old friend and ally Nationalist China, and so on. However, the majority sentiment was that all of our efforts were good things to do. It was in the American interest. It was a pity that the interests of Taiwan seemed to be affected, although, as the years went by, and Taiwan survived perfectly well-in fact, developed a booming economy-this concern subsided.

Q: When you were in EA, South Vietnam was essentially "going down the tubes" at this time. Was this process handled in EA, or was this "off to one side"?

HUMMEL: Assistant Secretary Phil Habib was heavily involved in this process. I was not involved nearly so much. Besides, I opted out to go to Ethiopia as Ambassador. I was away from EA during the final stages of the collapse of South Vietnam.

Q: Were you in EA when the "Watergate Affair" happened or had you left by that time?

HUMMEL: I should know the answer to this. Let me think. Yes, I was in EA.

Q: Did Watergate affect our operations at all? We're talking about the slow expulsion of President Nixon from office, a long, drawn-out affair. How did this process affect you?

HUMMEL: Henry Kissinger has described this process in one of his books. He referred to Watergate as causing a kind of paralysis which affected American credibility in foreign affairs. Looking back, I'm not sure that was so much the case as Henry made it out to be. He felt acutely that with a weakened President there were many things that we could not do, and our promises could not be as much of a factor in world affairs. Our position with the Soviet Union was undoubtedly affected, as our ability declined to negotiate difficult issues. However, looking back, I don't think that it was quite that important. In my view, it was not nearly as paralyzing to American diplomacy as Henry has since made it out to have been. But there is no doubt that it hampered us.

Q: In the first place, I think that we were fortunate to have Henry Kissinger as Secretary of State at that time. He was somebody who was used to doing things pretty much on his own, although he obviously had his problems with "bucking up" President Nixon at the time. We still had a powerful Secretary of State.

By the way, if something occurs to you regarding China, don't hesitate to raise it.

Before we leave this period completely, were there any particular problems with other countries? You mentioned that you also oversaw relations with Australia and New Zealand. Did New Zealand attitudes toward our nuclear policies present a problem?

HUMMEL: No. That came very much later, when I was stationed in China. I accompanied Kenneth Rush, who was Deputy Secretary of State, on a trip to a SEATO, Southeast Asian Treaty Organization meeting in Australia. We visited New Zealand at the same time, the first time I had ever visited that country. I had been to Australia before. I have a private view of New Zealand. I found it extraordinary that the New Zealand cabinet met with us, including cocktails and dinner. They were a group of people who were exceedingly ignorant about world affairs. They were the country cousins of the English-speaking world. Their views were naive, uninformed, and parochial, but they were pleasant people. There wasn't a broad based brain in the whole bunch.

Q: Did you have a feeling at that time that they were essentially coming out of the British labor movement?

HUMMEL: No, I think that they were mostly conservative. The labor people hadn't begun to take over the New Zealand Government.

Q: How did you find the Australians?

HUMMEL: I liked them. They were smart and had a good Foreign Service. I always had excellent relationships with their Ambassadors, in Washington and overseas. They had a good corps of Chinese language officers. One of them who recently retired was at five different posts at the same time I was there. They also have a strand of Labor Party Leftism. I don't really mean that as a criticism. I know that some of the Australian diplomats whom I knew were affected by some fairly strange ideas related to Vietnam.

Q: Why not stop at this point? We will pick up next time with the period when you served in Ethiopia as Ambassador, from 1975 to 1976.

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Q: Today is February 27, 1995. Mr. Ambassador, we left this interview at the time when you had left the Bureau of East Asian Affairs as a Deputy Assistant Secretary.

HUMMEL: If you don't mind, I've thought of two things which I would like to add to the previous section.

Q: Please do.

HUMMEL: This concerns my relationship with Henry Kissinger. When I was coming back to Washington on the plane with him from China in 1972, I believe, after a trip to Beijing, where we were busy as hell. The way Henry handled things, we stayed up until 3:00 AM, sending off telegrams that he told us to draft and send. He used to go to bed much earlier. After a few nights of only three or four hours of sleep, you get pretty tired. We finished in Beijing and were on our way back to Washington.

Larry Eagleburger, senior staff assistant to Kissinger at the time, who was always the emissary for Henry, called me into a corner of the aircraft and said that Henry would like to offer me the job of spokesman for the State Department. I said that I would like to think it over. After we got back to Washington, I decided that I didn't want to be the spokesman. Henry approached me directly on the matter. I said that, frankly, I had been in Washington for a considerable period of time and I found that it was not nearly as much fun as being in the field as an Ambassador. I knew how to be an Ambassador, as I had had experience of holding that position by that time. I said that Washington is not nearly as satisfactory as being overseas. For one thing, the Foreign Service gives you a kind of rejuvenation by moving from country to country and having to learn about new people and trying to understand them. I said that this is an essential part of the Foreign Service experience. You don't get that here in Washington. I didn't get much satisfaction or fun out of arguing with Americans. I got a lot more satisfaction out of being in a foreign environment and trying to influence foreigners. So I said, "Thanks, but no. I don't want to do this."

Also, though I didn't tell him this, tying yourself too closely to a rocket like Henry, who is also a very abrasive person, can be pretty wearing. I think I mentioned earlier that I have seen Larry Eagleburger, who was closer to Henry than anybody else, coming out of Henry's office in tears because of the way Henry had savaged him, criticized him, and told him what an idiot he was, that he wasn't doing things right, and so on. This kind of behavior would go on even with close associates. The spokesman's job involves being extremely close to the Secretary.

Q: Did you also have any personal qualms about being the spokesman for Henry Kissinger? He did not have a reputation for being "open." If he wants to have any credibility, one of the things a spokesman has to have is being able to speak with a "straight tongue."

HUMMEL: No, frankly, I didn't have any qualms about that because I knew that if I had to take that job, I would handle it in my own way. I would simply refuse instructions that were duplicitous. Now, dodging and weaving and not admitting that one is considering something is a subject that comes up all the time with the correspondents. They ask, "Are you considering this or that?" They always want to jump on a future contingency. Nine times out of ten you can't say that. You can't tell them whether you're considering something.

Q: Of course, you always have to consider various things. That's part of the job.

HUMMEL: But that's not the way correspondents work. The headline would read, "State Department Considering (blah, blah, blah)," as if it were news that the State Department was considering such a thing. That's only one example. But no, that particular thing didn't bother me very much.

Q: I interviewed George Vest [former Director General of the Foreign Service and Ambassador to the European Community]...

HUMMEL: He actually took the job of spokesman for the Department after I turned it down.

Q: This didn't work out. Anybody who is interested in the subject, might look at the transcript of the George Vest interview. He found himself in the position that he couldn't "stand" Henry Kissinger and his way of operation. It wasn't just the job-it was Henry Kissinger.

HUMMEL: Well, maybe I'm oriental enough to deal with that, or maybe I hadn't foreseen all of the difficulties. After we got back to Washington and I was once again Acting Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs, I think that Bob Ingersoll may have come in by that time for a short period as Assistant Secretary. Then Henry Kissinger grabbed him and moved him up to be Deputy Secretary, a job which, I'm afraid, was beyond Ingersoll's capacities. He didn't last very long in that position.

Anyway, at some point or other Henry once again asked Larry Eagleburger to sound me out on whether I would be the Director of INR, the Bureau of Intelligence Research. Once again, I scratched my head. I also had doubts about my ability to handle the job. For one thing, this job requires a degree of familiarity with the world outside the Department of State dealing with research and with academia. Some very distinguished people had already had that job. I said, "No," and once again Henry called me into his office and said, "Why don't you want to take that INR job?" I gave him the same kind of answer-that it wasn't nearly as much fun being here in Washington as being overseas. I would much prefer to go overseas. So Henry grunted, and I left the office.

Later on, Larry Eagleburger asked me, "What did you tell Henry about the INR job?" So I told him. Larry laughed and said, "You know, that SOB can twist anything. You know what he told me about you? He said, 'That goddamned Hummel. He wants to go overseas and study anthropology.'" This was not too far off, but it was typical of the way Henry could distort something. Anyway, I'm proud of having been offered these two jobs. I also think that it was rather smart of me not to have taken either of them. The INR job might have been beyond my ability to handle easily.

Q: How did your assignment to Ethiopia as Ambassador come about?

HUMMEL: Phil Habib came in as Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. I think that he had just returned from being Ambassador to South Korea. Habib was absolutely an ideal choice for the position of Assistant Secretary. I had no complaint about that, though I was a little bit disappointed at having been passed over for Assistant Secretary once again, after been Acting for so long. However, there was no question that Phil Habib was the better choice. He was a terrific guy and a real mover and shaker. He knew the Washington scene so well. As you probably know, he was one of the most respected Foreign Service Officers we've ever had.

When Habib came in as Assistant Secretary, I could see that I was going to be principal deputy forever, unless I made a move. The post of Ambassador to Ethiopia had been vacant for about a year. I asked to be considered for that assignment.

The situation there was that Emperor Haile Selassie was under detention and the Military Committee, called the "Derg," had taken over and slaughtered a bunch of the Emperor's old guard-I think that it was in October, 1974.

One thing led to another. Phil Habib said that he could get me a better job if I'd just hang around the office a little while. However, I pressed ahead with this assignment. I went out to Addis Ababa early-I think it was January, 1975.

Q: You're listed as having served there in 1975-1976. You might have gone out there before then. Before we get there, I'd like to ask you to talk a little about Ethiopia. This country was outside your province. Did you want to serve in Ethiopia because it was there and the post of Ambassador happened to be available, or were there any other considerations?

HUMMEL: During my year at the National War College I had elected to go around Africa on the overseas trip which used to be an annual feature of the course. We went around Africa, stopping at many places, including Addis Ababa. So I had a brief look at what was then a very pleasant post. Of course, the Emperor was in charge, and the Ethiopians are such extraordinarily lively and interesting people. I knew pretty much what I was getting into. By the time I arrived, as I say, the Emperor had already been deposed, and the situation was very fluid and interesting to study.

I also knew that serving in Addis Ababa was not the same thing as being in any other African country, partly because of the presence of the headquarters of the Organization of African Unity OAU. All of the diplomats stationed in Addis needed to know a great deal about events all over Africa, because these situations came to the attention of the OAU. The UN Economic Commission for Africa was also located in Addis. So it was a job that required a lot of learning about a lot of places-not just Ethiopia.

Q: How did you prepare yourself to go to Ethiopia?

HUMMEL: I got what I could read and had time for. As I recall it, I was still pretty busy in the EA Bureau, right up until the time I left Washington. My wife had the chore once again of packing up and she came along later. As it happened, I had been there only about a week when my father died, so I came back for the funeral. His death was not completely unexpected. My brother, who lives in Minneapolis, handled most of the arrangements. By the time I got back to the United States, things were pretty much taken care of.

Anyway, aside from getting to know the people, at that time the infamous Major Mengistu, who later wound up as the Leftist dictator by shooting both superiors, was the number three person in the Military Committee. The other two military officers above him in the Derg were relatively sensible. They had been abroad-both of them had been to the United States for military training. They knew something of the outside world. They were not fanatics. They were just trying to make Ethiopia into a better country.

Looking back at all this, I remember that I used to say, in an oversimplified way, that the Emperor was deposed because he established only two modern institutions in Ethiopia, and failed to establish the third. The two institutions that he did establish ran quite well. One was a unified military establishment, instead of all of the tribal fiefdoms that had existed early in his reign. Of course, he had been Emperor for a long time.

Q: I think he had been in office since 1913.

HUMMEL: The other institution he created was a group of highly intelligent, foreign-trained civil servants and a pretty good university. In other words, an intelligentsia which was really quite outstanding-not just by African, but by other standards as well.

Q: He had a good Foreign Service which I ran across in Yugoslavia. They were really very impressive.

HUMMEL: And a first class airline, Ethiopian Airlines, whose personnel were trained by TWA.

What he did not know how to do-as so many dictators do not know how to do-was to create democratic institutions. Because he did not create those institutions, not even a semblance of a Parliament, he was overthrown. The immediate or proximate cause of his overthrow was the disgust and disillusionment with him on the part of the Ethiopian people and the people in these institutions, because, whether due to his age or infirmity or because he was misinformed, he didn't do anything about a horrible famine. People were literally dying along the side of the main North-South road. This was the result of a periodic cycle of drought and famine. The Emperor didn't want to ask for international assistance, so there wasn't any, even though people were clamoring for it. There was no democratic way to raise this issue with him.

The military establishment became very upset. Many of them were Western-educated, and they constituted an organized group. First off, they deposed the Emperor and then set up a Military Committee, the Derg. Then they began to squabble among themselves, and 80 or 90 of the principal officers loyal to the Emperor were murdered. This happened after the Emperor had been deposed.

Q: And before you arrived.

HUMMEL: Before I arrived.

Q: I would like to go back and set the stage before you arrived in Ethiopia. One question concerns how the Foreign Service works. Here you were at a major post, the Embassy in Addis Ababa. We now have a corps of African specialists. How did they receive you? You were very clearly an East Asian "hand" and all of a sudden you appeared as Ambassador to Ethiopia. Was there a problem there?

HUMMEL: No, I don't think so. I had a first class Deputy Chief of Mission.

Q: I'm really thinking about the Bureau of African Affairs. Did you find people digging their heels in there?

HUMMEL: If they were, I didn't hear about it and never saw any evidence of non-cooperation or anything like that. On that same subject, there had been no Ambassador at post for almost a year.

Q: Who had been the previous Ambassador?

HUMMEL: Ross Adair, a former Congressman from Indiana. He was a perfectly nice guy who did a fairly good job, as far as I could make out. I think that it was a relief to everyone when a new Ambassador arrived. We really needed a new Ambassador because of the political situation. Also, there was an advantage in having a professional Foreign Service Officer as Ambassador instead of a political appointee.

Q: When you went out to Ethiopia in 1975, things were obviously in a state of flux. The dictatorship of Mengistu had not yet been established. What did you consider American interests were in Ethiopia at that time? What goals did you set for yourself to try to achieve?

HUMMEL: We didn't have much of a trade interest, although we had rather serious squabbles with the Ethiopian Government over trade. The Hickenlooper Amendment caused us repeatedly to threaten to terminate our rather large aid program.

Q: What was the Hickenlooper Amendment?

HUMMEL: It concerned expropriation of American firms.

Q: The essence of the Hickenlooper Amendment was that uncompensated expropriation of American firms would result in a cut-off of aid.

HUMMEL: That's right. I had a lot of wrangling on that issue with the members of the Derg, including Mengistu. I pointed out to them the seriousness of this US legislative provision, which could result in a termination of all aid, both military and civilian.

One of our major concerns in Ethiopia was strategic. It involved the Soviet factor. At that point the Soviets had Somalia as their client state. They had set up a large base in Berbera formerly, the capital of British Somaliland. The status of Djibouti had not been settled at all. As you know, this territory eventually became independent, but at that time it was still occupied by the French and was guarded by the French Foreign Legion. It was a rather peaceful place in a rather turbulent area. So keeping the Ethiopians on our side as a barrier to the expansion of the Soviet presence in East Africa, and especially the so-called Horn of Africa, was one of our main concerns.

Q: How about the status of Kagnew Station?

HUMMEL: That was considered to be quite important. It was located in the city of Asmara in the Province of Eritrea. The Eritrean people belong to a somewhat different linguistic group, and they have a different history, too. Asmara is now the capital of Eritrea, which has been independent from Ethiopia since 1993. Eritrea was much more Westernized because of a much longer occupation by the Italians. As a matter of fact, a very large portion of the central, Ethiopian Government civilian and military officials were Eritreans and were not members of the main ruling group in Ethiopia, the Amharas.

Q: Was there any question about Kagnev Station? How to deal with the future status of Kagnev Station was always the problem in the Horn of Africa and was involved in the Somalia issue. It was something like the question of Greece and Turkey in the Eastern Mediterranean. We found ourselves in the middle in terms of giving aid and so forth. Kagnev Station was long considered an absolute, strategic "must" in the area. It was essentially a communications station, for the purpose of eavesdropping and also relaying messages. Had you talked to our military and gotten any feel as to whether this station was becoming outmoded at that time because of the existence of satellite communications systems?

HUMMEL: No. It was after my time in Ethiopia that the U. S. military began to admit, very reluctantly, that maybe, conceivably, they could get along without Kagnev Station. Later on, of course, the Ethiopian Government under Mengistu shut it down. At the time the station was shut down, there were alternatives available for all of the missions which you mentioned-eavesdropping, humint human intelligence gathering, communications relay, and the support of space flight.

Q: When you went to Ethiopia were you told that Kagnev Station was vital?

HUMMEL: That's right. It was considered vital.

Q: Were there any questions on the State Department side regarding Kagnev Station?

HUMMEL: No, not that I recall. I think that many of us took the military's insistence that Kagnev Station was vital with a grain of salt because we know the propensity of our military to exaggerate these matters. They exaggerate for their own reasons because they think that the wishy-washy, striped pants State Department might give away facilities of this kind too easily. So they err on one side and we may sometimes err on the other.

Q: So you arrived in Addis Ababa in 1975. How did you see the situation on the ground?

HUMMEL: Well, the famine period was over. The internal stresses were being handled by the military, except, of course, for Eritrea, where the insurgency had been going on for many years, fueled by supplies from Islamic countries outside-from Sudan and from across the Red Sea in Aden, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia as well. They acted for Islamic reasons because the Ethiopian Government was Christian. That was a continuing problem which threatened the continued existence of Kagnaw Station in Asmara as well. So that was a worrisome matter.

There were frictions between the Amharas-who really are in the minority, although they claim to be a majority-and other ethnic groups, such as the people of the Province of Tigre, and so forth. These seemed to be fairly manageable. Southern Sudan was in a mess, but that had been the case for a very long time. I remember being instructed to try to get the Ethiopian military to halt their support for the insurgents in Southern Sudan, across the border. I was unsuccessful in these efforts. This situation was also related to the Central Ethiopian Government's need to have troops all over Eritrea and to safeguard the continued security of Asmara, in which we had a strong interest.

Q: How did you deal with the Derg when you arrived? Could you go and talk to any of them?

HUMMEL: Sure. I could easily get appointments whenever I needed them. They wanted to be friendly to the United States. They considered Somalia a serious threat to their security, as indeed it was, in view of the Soviet position there. They considered this a threat and therefore they were drawn to try to work out a modus vivendi with the United States so as to get continuing aid, both civilian and military.

Q: Since the Soviets were arming the Somalis, were we in a position where we felt that we had to arm the Ethiopians?

HUMMEL: Yes. We wanted to be a military counterweight.

Q: What were we doing with the Ethiopian Army?

HUMMEL: We provided them with some fighter aircraft, small arms, tanks, ammunition, and training.

Q: Was there any concern about what the Ethiopian Army was doing to the Eritreans? Were the Eritreans still called "Shiftas," rather than Eritrean bandits? That was the term used at one point. Was it a pejorative term? Were the Eritreans also called the Eritrean liberation forces? In those days were they considered liberators, rather than bandits?

HUMMEL: Of course, the government in Addis Ababa had its own words for them and didn't use the word liberation. However, neither did they downgrade them to the status of a bunch of shiftas or bandits. They knew that they were a very serious challenge to the government. Many of the Eritreans were Muslims. Actually, it turned out that Eritrea was about half Muslim and half Christian. However, the Muslim half was strongly supported by their Muslim friends in Sudan and also from across the Red Sea, as I mentioned.

Q: What sort of military mission did we have in Ethiopia at that time?

HUMMEL: We had a pretty large MAAG, or Military Assistance Advisory Group, supervising the military aid program. We had a large AID office, which was heavily involved in all kinds of developmental projects. We had a pretty large Peace Corps. The Peace Corps youngsters, who had to be pulled out shortly after I left Ethiopia because conditions became very tough because of security considerations, were quite dedicated and effective. The Ethiopians had their own views of the Peace Corps people. I had more than one Ethiopian say, "We thank you very much for these young Peace Corps people. They do good work. Also, it's very nice of you to send young ladies over, so we can sleep with them." The Ethiopians have quite a sense of humor!

One of the unlovely things about Ethiopian society was the way in which they looked down on and really discriminated against people with darker skin than they had and African features. This attitude was terribly hard on the foreign diplomatic community there. Ethiopians are very bright and lively people, and they were only half joking when they say that there are three kinds of people in Africa: there are the blacks, the pinks, and the whites. The blacks are the Bantus to the south, the West Africans, and those people who have Negroid facial features. They say, "You Westerners are the 'pinks.' We Ethiopians are the 'whites.'" I always enjoyed that. That comment went around as a "bon mot" every time the matter was mentioned. They were only half joking about their superiority. The wives of the West and southern African diplomats and their staffs who had to go to the markets to do the shopping were really despised and treated abominably by the Amhara shopkeepers. It was a kind of racial discrimination that was very difficult for them.

Q: They had their own minority group who were looked down upon. They were the Gullahs who had sort of "African" features. Did we make a practice of sending American Blacks either to the Peace Corps or in the Embassy or in AID?

HUMMEL: Yes.

Q: How did that work out?

HUMMEL: Anybody who was an American, no matter how he or she looked, had automatic status. I don't recall any signs of discrimination against African Americans who were assigned to Ethiopia by the U. S. Government.

Q: What was your impression of our aid program at the time you arrived in Ethiopia?

HUMMEL: I didn't have much to find fault with. All of it seemed useful and devoted to appropriate sectors of Ethiopia. I was not personally aware of any great waste or mismanagement. I'm sure that there was some leakage of aid funds through prominent Ethiopian officials. That happens in many societies. However, I didn't directly see any of that.

One thing that really burned me was the fact that the CIA people lied to me and refused to answer my requests for information about what the Israelis were doing to help the Ethiopian Government. As you know, the American-Israeli relationship was compartmentalized under Jim Angleton.

Q: He was the counterintelligence chief [of CIA].

HUMMEL: But he also handled the Israeli account in CIA. He wasn't going to let CIA officials tell anybody, especially people in the State Department, as I found out later, just what he knew about Israeli operations in Ethiopia or in any other country. I simply wanted to know about them both for planning purposes and to maintain my own credibility, so that the Ethiopians wouldn't think that I was so dumb that I didn't know what was going on. I also wanted to know from the point of our own interests. Who knows what the Israelis might have been up to? Later on, they were involved in some very difficult things in regard to Iran, for instance-I'm referring to the activities of Lt. Colonel Oliver North of the National Security Council staff and all that. But I could never get the CIA people to tell me what they knew. I tried leaning on the State Department and I may have written a personal letter to Secretary of State Kissinger about this. However, nobody was willing to jump in and say that I had a need to know.

Q: Were the Ethiopian Jews, the "Falashas" a factor at that time?

HUMMEL: No, that came later on, toward the very end of my tenure as Ambassador to Ethiopia. A man named Berger, the brother of Ambassador Sam Berger, a Foreign Service Officer and former Ambassador to South Korea, took up the cause of the Falashas, who were very dark-skinned remnants of a Jewish tribe who still carried on some Jewish religious practices, although they had lost any knowledge of the Hebrew language. Most of them were not literate, either. During my time in Ethiopia Sam Berger's brother was fighting a long drawn-out battle with the Israeli authorities, who did not wish to recognize the Falashas as people who deserved asylum in Israel. Eventually, Berger won out, and these people began to be airlifted out of Ethiopia to Israel. I think that they have all been moved to Israel by now.

Q: We played no particular role in this matter at the time you were in Ethiopia?

HUMMEL: No. But at the time I was there the protection or the release of the Falashas to go to Israel was not on the official Israeli agenda that I am aware of. The Israelis had policy problems with an issue like this. They had serious difficulties in maintaining footholds in many African countries, because they were expelled from so many of them. The Islamic countries put such great pressure on many African countries that the Israelis were hard put to have places where their airplanes could land and where they could conduct normal operations. So they cultivated the African countries where they were welcome and would not want to complicate relations with pressures on the government about what they considered side issues.

Q: What was the Embassy in Addis Ababa like-who was your DCM and how did the Embassy operate?

HUMMEL: My first DCM was named Parker. His tour was shortly completed, and he left. He was very good and very helpful in getting me started in Ethiopia. He was replaced by Art Tienken, who eventually became Ambassador to another African country.

Q: Mauritania, I believe.

HUMMEL: He was really a first class officer. He had had extensive experience in Africa. He was very upset when I would go off on bird shooting expeditions on Sundays with only one junior Foreign Service Officer, who was an Amharic speaker. Like me, he was very much interested in hunting as a sport. Ethiopia was a real paradise for bird shooting. The Ethiopian Christians, who belong to a branch of the Coptic Church, had adopted many Judaic traditions. They wouldn't eat pork, but they would allow pigs to be shot by others all over the place. They didn't eat wild birds or shellfish. Not eating wild birds meant that village boys were not killing birds, or disturbing them. My junior FSO friend and an AID Director, Ted Morse, a super guy, who would go out on these bird shooting expeditions. Sometimes there would be three of us and sometimes only two of us. We would drive out of Addis Ababa about an hour or so, up into the hills. I remember one time when we brought back 50 birds which we had shot.

Q: You kept the Embassy well-stocked with game birds?

HUMMEL: Yes, and other Embassies as well.

Q: Can we talk about developments while you were there? What happened when you were there as far as the Ethiopian Derg was concerned?

HUMMEL: I think that during the time I was there things were fairly stable. We had continuing trade problems. There's a spice company based in Kalamazoo, Michigan, which was more or less forced out of business. We had to threaten the Ethiopian Government with application of the Hickenlooper Amendment. We would make demands, but the Ethiopians never did very much about it. Aside from that, we didn't have any really serious difficulties.

Q: During the time you were there relations weren't tense, as they became later on.

HUMMEL: No. The Ethiopian Army was under pressure, not only from the Eritrean rebellion in the North, but also from continued incursions from Somalia. To this day the Somalis, I believe, have written into their constitution-insofar as Somalia has any constitution left-the need to reclaim the Ogaden area, which belongs to Ethiopia. Somalia also has a claim to part of Kenya.

Q: Yes, the five stars of the Somali flag represent Djibouti, Ogaden, Kenya, the former British Somaliland, and the former Italian Somaliland. It's an "aggressive" constitution, you might say.

Back in 1960-1961 I was the INR specialist on the Horn of Africa. Everything there was a "zero sum" game, so to speak. If we helped Somalia, the Ethiopians got mad. The contention then was that Somalia could always be "bought." How were your relations with our Embassy in Mogadishu? Did you get together from time to time?

HUMMEL: Yes, we did, and that's one of the things that I'm proud of. As far as I know, I invented this idea of having a mini Chiefs of Mission conference, originated in the field, among Ambassadors, only inviting Washington at the last minute. I did this again when I was Ambassador in Pakistan and we had meetings of the American Ambassadors to South Asian countries. We would send messages laterally which were not repeated to Washington to make plans. I organized a U. S. Chiefs of Mission conference for Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, and Kenya, which we held in Nairobi.

After we'd settled on a date and place we would use our own travel funds, so we didn't have to ask Washington for that. Only a few weeks before the meeting we let Washington know that we were going to have this conference and would like to have some modest participation by the Department. I say "modest," because I'd been through the mill, when I was Ambassador to Burma and also as Acting Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs, of having these enormous Chiefs of Mission conferences. They were attended, not only by all of the Ambassadors in the Far East (not very many-only 13 or 14). The bad thing was that the Department of Defense would send at least five people and AID would send six people, USIA, CIA, Treasury, Agriculture and all. The whole room would be crowded with bystanders sent from Washington, many just for a junket. They probably learned something from what the chiefs of mission were saying, but the whole process was terribly cumbersome and prevented confidential dialogue. It was to avoid that kind of chiefs of mission conference that I set it as I did. As I recall, we only had two people from Washington-and both of them were appropriate and welcome, and from the State Department.

There was one very contentious issue that eventually divided us in Nairobi. I flatly refused to participate in discussion of it. It involved something that had been in the American press-about aid to a rebel in Angola. The Ambassador to Kenya, a political appointee who was, I thought, quite naive, was trying to get us to send a message to Washington saying that the United States should withdraw support for that program.

Q: I think that at that point, when Henry Kissinger was Secretary of State, we were giving military assistance to Jonas Savimbi.

HUMMEL: I was not at all happy with American policy on this issue, but I said that I simply would not sign a declaration which only one side of the issue described. The draft he presented to us was not descriptive of the issue and only demanded one thing from the United States, stopping aid, without assessing its consequences or the alternatives to it. It was just a dumb and one-sided thing to do. However, that did not harm the conference. We got along quite well, personally.

Q: What about your views on American policy toward Somalia? Was Somalia considered a "write-off" at that time?

HUMMEL: Yes. It's a little bit odd, considering what we did later. However, Somalia was considered a "write-off" because the Soviets were deploying such substantial assets there. After I left Ethiopia the story of how the Soviets neatly switched their client relationship from Somalia to Ethiopia, while we took on Somalia as a client, has never really been told. It should be, because it is a rather astonishing sequence of events in the Cold War.

Q: Did you have any dealings with Mengistu?

HUMMEL: Yes, indeed, on several occasions.

Q: Would you talk about how you viewed him, or is this something that you haven't thought about much?

HUMMEL: I considered him to be intellectually several steps below the intelligence of his two superiors in the Derg. A triumvirate ran the Military Committee, which had about 40 members. The three men I refer to formed the Executive Committee. Taferi Banti was the top man, Atenafu was number two, and Mengistu was number three.

As I said earlier, Benti and Atanafu were pretty savvy people. I felt much more comfortable dealing with them than with Mengistu. I had no idea that Mengistu would turn out to be the monster he became. However, I certainly felt that he was of lesser quality as a leader, trickier, and somewhat hostile in his manner. I mean that he was not very sympathetic to the American point of view. The other two were more sympathetic, or at least showed some understanding of American positions. Mengistu didn't want to show such understanding. My talks with him were usually somewhat confrontational.

Q: Didn't we still have a Consulate General in Asmara?

HUMMEL: Yes, and we had a Consulate General in Djibouti, which was not, of course, part of Ethiopia.

Q: Regarding the Consulate General in Asmara, did they suffer from what you might call localities in their view of the Eritrean independence movement?

HUMMEL: No, they had a kind of siege syndrome. It was indeed a siege-type situation, and security was very poor. The people assigned there served for short tours because of the danger to everybody in Asmara. There was no real contact between the Eritreans and our people in the Consulate General because of the civil war that was going on. If anything, they had sympathy for the efforts of the Central Ethiopian Government in its efforts to unify the country and not let it fall apart. The key port in Eritrea was Massawa. Land communications between Asmara and Massawa were continually being broken by the insurgents. This situation greatly affected the viability of Asmara itself. The North-South road, I think, was generally kept open to the rest of Ethiopia, so that food and other supplies could get in that way.

Q: What about political and economic reporting in Tigre and other parts of Ethiopia, including the Ogaden area? Were your officers able to get out and around and report on the situation?

HUMMEL: Yes, quite satisfactorily. Conditions were not so bad that people didn't want to go. On the other hand, travel is always an adventure, and there were lots of volunteers, including myself. I went to Asmara and to Harar and other places. We also took family trips down to the lower altitudes, to get out of Addis Ababa, which is 8,000 feet above sea level. The climate in Addis Ababa is very nice because of its altitude. However, it takes a little while to get used to it. During the first week or two that I was in Addis Ababa, I used to run out of breath, walking from the Ambassador's Residence about 100 yards to the Chancery. It was all in one compound.

Q: Did members of the Haile Selassie regime try to cultivate Embassy people, or were they so much "put down" that there wasn't any real contact with them?

HUMMEL: We had no real contact with them. However, a good many of the government officials at the ministerial and vice ministerial level had been to the United States for an education. They were not all military men. The military government allowed quite a number of talented people to serve as ministers of education, for example. One interesting aspect was that the Minister of Defense, whose name I can't recall at the moment but whom I can visualize very clearly, had been "recruited" by the CIA as an extremely useful informant. This has been in the press. This was a great help to our appreciation of what was going on in Ethiopia. However, even he didn't know all of the things that his own government, and also the Israelis, were up to. I didn't feel that we had enough of a handle on what the Ethiopian military were doing.

Q: In subsequent years and since you left Ethiopia, have you learned what the Israelis were up to?

HUMMEL: They were involved in the training of special, elite units and the provision of high-tech hardware. How high-tech I don't really know. It was not terribly high, because the Ethiopians couldn't have handled it. However, the Israeli motive was, as I said, to maintain a foothold in Ethiopia. Essentially, this did not clash with any American interest—certainly not in my time, but it did mean that our own military aid planning was defective.

Q: What about the ties between Ethiopia and American educational institutions? These ties go 'way back. Was this a factor when you were there?

HUMMEL: Yes. The flow of scholars back and forth between the two countries was continuous. The number of young Ethiopian university graduates who came to the United States was very large. They went back to Ethiopia. It was quite a close, intellectual relationship.

Toward the end of my time in Ethiopia, Mengistu began to show his power. Where he got his far left impetus from, I'm not sure. Probably, looking back, it was the work of Soviet or Ethiopian agents of one kind or another. Anyway, he organized the "Zemacha", a sort of "Red Guard" movement. He armed some of them and organized and indoctrinated them in a thoroughly Marxist way, to try and get a foothold in the villages of Ethiopia, which they did fairly successfully. He promised the villagers a new kind of regime, land reform, official assistance, and so forth. These young "Red Guards" became more and more menacing and more anti-foreign and eventually became the basis for Mengistu's total usurpation of power. After I left, of course, Mengistu shot his two superiors across a conference table and took power in that fashion. That was a symbol of the way he ran the country afterwards. There was a horrible weeding out and massacre of liberals and non-Marxists after he took over.

Q: Going back to the 1960's, Emperor Haile Selassie had made the deliberate decision to send a number of students to the Soviet Union and other countries of the Soviet bloc to show a certain balance. They were not treated very well because of racist attitudes, which were really rampant, even against the Amharas. In 1964 there was a sort of mini revolt of Ethiopians in training in Bulgaria. I felt some of the consequences of this when I was in Yugoslavia as a consular officer because there was a big exodus of these Ethiopians. Did you notice any influence of Soviet education at the time that you were there?

HUMMEL: No, not directly. However, I noticed it indirectly through the actions of Mengistu, who was basically supported by groups of far leftist thinkers.

Q: At the time you were there, were we concerned about the far left in Ethiopia?

HUMMEL: Yes, we were. However, we thought-at least I thought, mistakenly-that the weight and political center of gravity of the Derg itself would prevent a communist takeover. There was also the fact that the main enemy of Ethiopia, Somalia, was Marxist-oriented and supported by the Soviet Union. We felt that this would deter any internal shift toward Marxism in Ethiopia because the Ethiopians were so conscious of what was happening in Somalia. It turned out that it didn't work out that way at all. Mengistu was able to jerk the whole system around to a really silly and extreme, Marxist mode.

Q: I think that this points out something that is important for anybody studying diplomacy to understand. That is, when you're in a country or looking at it from outside, you can make all of the predictions you want. However, if you find a ruthless man or woman who wants to change things around, they can [often do so], essentially in an unpredictable way.

HUMMEL: That's right. You do not have the capability to predict coming events. CIA is quite often blamed for not foreseeing these things. Well, the people in these countries themselves do not foresee them, either.

Q: Most coup d'etats are not overly predictable, because if we can predict them from the outside, the people who are really concerned can predict them from the inside, and they stop them.

HUMMEL: I remember later on when Deng Xiaoping re-emerged in China in 1973, I was back in the Department. Yes, I was Deputy Assistant Secretary then. Deng re-emerged and came to a special session of the UN in New York. We knew of his background. He had been dismissed from office during the Cultural Revolution and had only recently been rehabilitated, and came out and was visible. He and the Foreign Minister of China, Chiao Guanhua, came for a small, private dinner given by Kissinger. It was an extremely interesting session. It's always fascinating when you can see Kissinger deal with these people, like Chiao Guanhua as equals. At that time, by the way, Deng Xiaoping was very tentative in what he said. He hadn't had time to absorb all of the briefs about situations all around the world. So he kept turning to other people to discuss these matters. He was completely different from what he was later on, when he had a full grasp of the substance of the various issues. I enjoyed such sessions, too, when I was in Beijing.

The point of this was that shortly after-I can't remember the year-Deng was again purged by Mao Zedong, allegedly for promoting a capitalist road. Henry Kissinger only half joking asked me, "God damn it Hummel! Why didn't you tell me that our friend, Deng Xiaoping, was going to be purged?" I said, "Henry, Deng himself didn't know that he was going to be purged. Otherwise, he would have behaved differently. How can you expect me to know what he himself didn't know?"

Q: One last question before we leave Ethiopia. How did you find working with the OAU, the Organization of African Unity? How did it operate as you saw it in those days?

HUMMEL: They had some very bright people associated with it. One of the brightest was an Egyptian with an Italian name, and there were others like him, too. They were some very savvy people but they couldn't get the OAU to intervene actively in problems as they arose. For instance, a problem with Mauritania.

Q: This concerned the "Polisario" question.

HUMMEL: Western Sahara. They couldn't get together to do anything. They couldn't handle that. Of course, as it turned out in later years the OAU has not been a factor in the solution of any of the major problems of Africa-such as Southwest Africa or Namibia. The whole business of intervention in Liberia was handled by a consortium of neighboring, West African countries. There was the Mauritania problem-all of these things. It is a great tragedy that the OAU could not get itself together to act effectively and collectively on any issue that I can think of. Yet the people in the OAU were very good as sources of information. I enjoyed good personal relations with them. We would go to dinner or talk about these issues, during a call. Of course, the OAU was founded when Emperor Haile Selassie, in his post World War II prime, brokered an agreement between North and South Sudan, with the help of this fledgling organization, which later became the OAU. So the OAU was founded on the basis of a successful solution to an African problem, organized by Haile Selassie. However, as far as I can remember, the OAU never pulled off anything substantial like that again.

Q: Was this an endemic problem?

HUMMEL: It was an inability to go act because of the different factions involved-the Islamic faction, the West African faction, and so forth.

Q: Then you left Ethiopia after not too long a period. You left in 1976. How come?

HUMMEL: It was my good luck to be saved from the debacle of our relationship with Ethiopia by being promoted back to be full-fledged Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs, because Phil Habib, who had held that job, was moved upstairs to be Under Secretary for Political Affairs. He arranged for me to come back to EA and take over his old job.

Q: I take it that you looked forward to it. This was something which you wanted to do.

HUMMEL: Yes. It was a step up to a job that I knew how to do. I knew a lot about it. I knew all of the countries and had visited them all. I felt secure that I was able to handle the job, and I'd wanted it for several years when I was principal Deputy.

Q: You were there for the last two years of the administration of President Ford.

HUMMEL: No, I was there only about six months, because the elections of 1976 occurred, and Carter came in as President. So I had only a short tenure there. I was working very closely with Henry Kissinger and Phil Habib, both of whom were very tough taskmasters.

Q: First, could you talk about working with Phil Habib? He's one of the great figures of American foreign affairs. How did he operate at that time when you saw him and how did he use you?

HUMMEL: I felt that he was looking over my shoulder a little too much. He wanted to be informed about everything that I was doing, partly because of his long background in the EA area. I don't think it was because he didn't have confidence in my judgment. He just wanted to know because he knew that Henry would want to know. So he kept a very close eye on me. I always admired Phil and liked him. We had an excellent and very joshing kind of insult relationship which I valued very much.

I think that I mentioned earlier that he was the one who got me into the business of negotiating the departure of Sihanouk's mother from Cambodia, so that she and some members of Sihanouk's family could join him. Sihanouk was already in China and was spending a lot of time in North Korea. Sihanouk asked us, along with the Department of Defense, to negotiate their departure [from Cambodia]. This was a complex business.

The PRC Liaison Office in Washington and our Liaison Office in Beijing were set up simultaneously. I was pretty much in charge of that. Skipping back a notch before I became Assistant Secretary-I was still Acting Assistant Secretary-the Chinese Communists were already in Washington. We had quite a few conversations with them, and I was sitting alongside Henry Kissinger. The Chinese ambassadorial level head of the Chinese Liaison Office was on the other side if the table. We discussed quite a number of issues-global issues, United Nations issues, trade matters, exchange of persons issues.

Q: The time that you were in EA as Assistant Secretary was relatively short. Was China the main issue? This was all very exciting, wasn't it?

HUMMEL: Yes, I suppose that it was. The Japan account was not entirely in my hands. The deficit in our trade with Japan was already becoming worrisome-at the level of \$9 billion per year. Now it's, what-\$90 billion? I think that Phil Habib took the management of relations with Japan out of my hands, along with Vietnam.

Other issues popped up and had to be handled. Once again, I'm not exactly sure of the timing-whether before I was back as full-fledged Assistant Secretary in the EA Bureau or afterwards.

During both periods we discovered that in connection with Taiwan-which, of course, I knew very well-and South Korea there were certain nuclear plans under way. Both countries had made a beginning on nuclear programs which could, eventually, have led to nuclear weapons. We stamped on those with great vigor. To this day I am quite sure that neither South Korea nor Taiwan has a substantial nuclear program. When this kind of information comes up, it calls for quick and unequivocal action.

Q: How about South Korea? Were you Assistant Secretary of EA in July, 1976, when we had a rather serious incident [in the DMZ-Demilitarized Zone]? Several American officers were killed. I had just arrived in Seoul for duty as Consul General, along with my colleague, Tom Stern. He was the DCM who had been left as Chargé ½ d'Affaires. He was told by Dick Sneider before he went out to Seoul, "Oh, you'll have no problem at all. Just coast." Entava [phonetic] had just arrived, too. Could you talk about that?

HUMMEL: I was put in charge of the task force in the State Department Operations Center which dealt with this matter. The circumstances were that a U. S. military work party, with axes and saws, was taking down a tree which was obscuring our view of something on the North Korean side that we wanted to keep an eye on. Some North Korean thugs came across to our side of the line at Panmunjom and murdered three officers on our side with axes.

We had an immediate confrontation. The question was what to do and how to do it. Nobody felt that we ought to go to war, I'm glad to say. However, there were various measures considered, including international condemnation, which we worked on very hard. I remember that at one point I was the front man, although, once again, Phil Habib was very actively involved in everything that was going on, quite naturally, because of the high visibility of the issue but also because he had been involved in South Korea as Ambassador. I recall that at one point I told the Department spokesman, whose name I've forgotten, to say that we wanted a North Korean apology for the incident and a promise that this incident would never happen again. In short, we wanted the moon. I had instructed the spokesman to say that the latest North Korean statement was "unacceptable".

This sent Phil Habib into a frenzy of fury. He said, "Who told you to say that it was unacceptable? Unacceptable?" So I took the heat on that. In fact, [the North Korean statement was not acceptable. I honestly don't know what we should have said. I suppose that Henry Kissinger had stomped on Phil Habib for some reason. Fortunately, Phyllis Oakley, who was one of Phil's staff assistants and who is now an Assistant Secretary on her own in the State Department, came to me, on the same afternoon when I had received this chewing out from Phil Habib, and said, "Don't you remember that Phil Habib used the word 'unacceptable' when you two talked about this issue the day before?" I said, "Yes, I know, but let's forget about it." She said, "No, I'm not forgetting it." So she went in and told Phil that he had used the word "unacceptable." Since he was such a straightforward guy, Phil said, "Oh, well, I've got to go back and tell the other people that it's my fault." And he did. Of course, first of all, they jumped on the spokesman, but I stepped in and took the blame.

Q: Well, "unacceptable" may sound like a semantic distinction, but in diplomatic parlance it's a very strong word.

HUMMEL: Yes, it is.

Q: So it's not just a matter of words. It carries connotations.

HUMMEL: But in that situation, considering the kind of language that North Korea regularly uses, it isn't much.

Q: Can you remember what decision was made about what to do about the whole thing?

HUMMEL: We extracted as much of a concession as we could. New arrangements were reached about how to do maintenance work in the DMZ itself in the future. The whole thing eventually subsided, although we never got any satisfaction.

Q: I recall attending the Country Team meeting [in Seoul] when we were discussing the issue. We did send in a work party to take down the tree. There certainly was a lot of tension about that.

HUMMEL: You're right.

Q: I must say that my contribution to that was to say, "For God's sake, make sure that the chain saw works!" I could see us going out there to take down this tree with a chain saw. That was our "show of force," although there were ship movements ordered, and we moved airplanes into the area.

HUMMEL: We made a big thing of it, including threatening movements of ships and planes, as you said.

Q: This was a relatively short time when you were Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs on this occasion. However, did we have any special problems with the Philippines? Was President Marcos considered a problem, or was this just sort of Marcos being Marcos at that time?

HUMMEL: I'd have to go back and check the dates again, but no, Marcos was just Marcos, and, in fact, it's not generally remembered, but when Marcos took over the whole government in a kind of peaceful coup d'etat in 1972, many people in the U. S., the Philippines, and elsewhere heaved a sigh of relief.

It was like the way things happened in Pakistan, when General Zia moved in with a coup d'etat to prevent what looked like a civil war breaking out. People breathed a sigh of relief that this was being solved. In Zia's case he did not hold elections until many years later, although he promised to hold them.

Marcos turned out to be a disaster for the Philippines, too. At the time he took over the government, I remember that the Philippine Senate had not ratified any appointments, treaties, or agreements, including our bases agreement, for years, because of the disarray within the Senate. That's another story that we'll be coming to. The so-called "oligarchies," the landowners, were very powerful. They had their own, private armies which were rampant, all over the place.

The Philippine press was totally irresponsible. The court system was corrupt and venal. Perhaps it's trivial, but I had a clipping from a newspaper from about 1950. It was about Mayor Lacson of Manila. I don't remember the name now of the other man. According to the story, Mayor Lacson thought that he was the "cock of the walk." He thought that he could do anything he wanted to do in the city of Manila, including ruining the whole structure of the city, and so forth. The other man-whose name I should remember-was described as always "sucking up" to the Americans, acting as a sucker for American policies, and letting the Americans do whatever they wanted to do. The last line of the story said "this sort of "cock-sucker" relationship cannot be tolerated!" [Laughter] That was a sample of the Philippine press.

To go back to your question, Marcos had turned a lot of things around, including a number of economic problems. He seemed to be addressing them in the early years after he took over the government.

Q: Was the base agreement a factor when you were Assistant Secretary?

HUMMEL: It became a factor during the very last bit of my tenure as Assistant Secretary. The elections occurred, of course, in November, 1976. Carter was elected President, and those of us in Presidential appointments were all likely to be replaced, as is normal in a change of administration.

After the 1976 election I had a very difficult and abrasive series of telephone calls, and also prepared a memorandum, on Henry Kissinger's direct instructions, trying to get the Filipinos to agree to accept four squadrons of F-5E fighter aircraft as the chief item in compensation for renewal of our bases agreements. This involved my negotiating directly with Carlos Romulo, the Foreign Secretary. The proposal was that we would send the aircraft to the Philippines and so many millions of dollars a year in return for the Philippines extending the Base Agreement, which was coming up for renewal in 1977. [This gave] Kissinger a way to push the Base Agreement through for another extension. He wanted to use the threat that, when President Carter assumed office, he was sure to reduce the American presence in the Philippines and pull our troops out of South Korea as he had said during the campaign.

Q: This was all part of President Carter's policy of "withdrawal from Asia."

HUMMEL: Right. This was part of his campaign. Henry, directly, and I, repeatedly, warned Carlos Romulo that he would get a much worse deal on the US bases if he did not agree and push this agreement through the Marcos government, before President Carter took over. I've heard some criticism about the propriety of doing this, but in order to get an agreement, which was considered extremely important, we needed to take advantage of whatever circumstances we had on our side to get the Filipinos to accept less than they might try to extract later on from another administration. This seemed to me to be a reasonable thing to do, and so I did it. However, we never reached an agreement.

Romulo, I think, could not have delivered Marcos, as it turned out, but it was worth trying. I had many abrasive telephone calls, negotiating with Romulo. At one point I remember Romulo saying, "I don't believe you. I think you're lying." I don't remember what the issue was. I didn't know what to say, so I just said, "I don't think that that's very diplomatic language, Mr. Secretary." He said, "What the hell do you know about diplomacy? I know much more than you do. I've served in the UN," and so forth. It really set him off.

I don't know what I should have said, instead, but we never did come to an agreement with the Philippines until the Carter administration. However, I remember that passage. This later affected my nomination to go to the Philippines as Ambassador.

Q: When did that happen?

HUMMEL: That was very shortly after, as a matter of fact. I went to Pakistan, instead, in early 1977.

Q: Did the Philippines refuse to grant you agreement?

HUMMEL: No, but they were dragging their feet, because Romulo didn't like me. They might have dragged their feet for a long time. I had been looking forward to this assignment to the Philippines. It's a fascinating place which I knew fairly well from a number of visits. However, as it turned out, Phil Habib, who was still Deputy Under Secretary for Political Affairs, called me into his office one day. This must have been in December, 1976, before we were all out of office and the Carter administration came in. Phil said that George Vest, who was all set to go to Pakistan as Ambassador, and already had his agreement from the Pakistan Government, was instead scheduled to be appointed Assistant Secretary for European Affairs.

Anyway, Phil said, "I don't know whether I can get you through Romulo in the Philippines, so why don't you go to Pakistan instead?" I knew a little bit about Pakistan and I said that I'd discuss it with my wife. I got her on the phone. She agreed, since it seemed somewhat questionable that I could go to the Philippines under the circumstances. This is how I got Pakistan instead.

Q: To go back, before we come to that, what about Vietnam? We are still talking about the period almost immediately after our withdrawal in 1975, when we pulled out of Vietnam in great disarray. Was it a matter of watching Vietnam from afar and saying that we no longer had much interest in it?

HUMMEL: Once again, Phil Habib, and perhaps the White House, were handling most of that.

I had to go up to Congress to testify, along with Admiral Moorer the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, since I was Acting Assistant Secretary. I remember repeated occasions when we were trying to prevent Congress from stopping all military operations in Cambodia. I think that our whole involvement in the Indochina peninsula was a great error in the first place. However, I continue to think, to this day, that tying the administration's hands and saying that we couldn't do anything in Cambodia when the North Vietnamese were all over the place and when the Viet Cong were using Cambodia as a sanctuary, was simply Congressional interference in military operations. I still think that this was dead wrong.

Senator Fulbright, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was one of those who were opposed to our doing anything in Cambodia. As has come up in the press recently, now that he has passed away, there was a tinge of racism in Senator Fulbright. It was first based on the Southern ethos in which he was raised. Other friends of mine who knew him quite well agree with this. Also, he really didn't like Asians very much, either. I think that he was right about opposing our Vietnam policy, but he certainly made things difficult for those of us in the field, especially the Americans who were dying in South Vietnam because of the continued flow of supplies to the communists and raids conducted from Cambodia.

Q: Looking at the dates, I see that you were Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs from 1976 to early 1977. By that time Cambodia and Vietnam had fallen, hadn't they?

HUMMEL: You're right. Saigon and Phnom Penh fell when I was Ambassador in Ethiopia. Phil was Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs at the time and had to oversee the debacle in Saigon and the evacuation of our mission.

Q: So you were a Deputy Assistant Secretary at that time. I don't think that we covered this before. We might talk about this. You were Deputy Assistant Secretary when...

HUMMEL: Obviously, before Habib became Assistant Secretary. I'd have to look that up, as I'm getting very confused about the dates.

Q: Were you in the Bureau of East Asian Affairs at the time of the fall of Saigon and Cambodia [April, 1975]?

HUMMEL: No, I was Ambassador to Ethiopia.

Q: So when you referred to testifying before Congress, you were talking about a previous time, when we were involved in Cambodia, and the Vietnam War was still going on, around 1974.

HUMMEL: That's right. There was great indignation among the American people at large about widening the war to Cambodia.

Q: This was in the spring of 1970. We went into Cambodia...

HUMMEL: And that set off the whole thing.

Q: But we were still supporting Cambodia when you were Deputy Assistant Secretary...

HUMMEL: Yes. In the meantime General Lon Nol had taken over in a coup d'etat. To this day, I think that the coup was pretty spontaneous. I don't think that we were prepared for it and hadn't organized it, either.

Q: Particularly if it turns out badly, the critics of our policies always make us out to have been all powerful. They say that we organized this coup. We put so and so into office, when usually we are just reacting to changing realities.

During the time you were Assistant Secretary, 1976 to early 1977, was our policy toward Vietnam one of simply watching to see what was happening? The Vietnamese Communists were [well established] in Cambodia by that time.

HUMMEL: I can't recall whether I was Assistant Secretary when the "Mayaguez Incident" took place.

Q: That would have been, I think, around 1975. I was with the Senior Seminar at the time. I was at the Air Force Academy when we intervened militarily to release the crew of the "Mayaguez." I think that you were probably still in Ethiopia.

HUMMEL: I think so because I was not directly involved in that crisis.

Q: Let's talk a bit about China during the time you were Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs [1976 to early 1977]. It was sort of an exciting time. The Chinese Communists were actually "coming on board." Were there any difficulties in getting the Chinese Communists "set up" in the United States or our getting "set up" in Mainland China?

HUMMEL: Not very much. They had a lot of friends here. As the numbers in their Liaison Office grew, they quickly bought the apartment hotel, Windsor Park Hotel, which they now occupy, at 2300 Connecticut Avenue, and settled in very smartly. They did a lot of interior renovation-all with their own people, of course. There were no Americans involved in this construction.

They were annoyed that they couldn't get their hands on the lovely residential property, called Twin Oaks, that had been occupied by the Chinese Nationalists. At the time of actual recognition of Beijing, and the de-recognition and the departure of the Nationalists from Twin Oaks, I was out of the country, as Ambassador to Pakistan. The Chinese Communists were easy to deal with. They had some very screwy ideas. We tried to help educate them. I had a lot of contact, particularly with the number two man in the Chinese Liaison Office, named Han Xu. He later became Ambassador. First he was here in Washington and then he was in China, and I dealt with him directly, both here and there.

Their political analysts were very upset about the "Watergate Affair." Of course, President Nixon was their great friend. They couldn't understand what was happening to him. I remember distinctly that other State Department officers and I were asked very seriously by members of the Chinese Liaison Office whether the problem was not just a matter between East Coast and West Coast capitalists. This is an illustration of the horribly simplistic way in which they were thinking of our society at that time. They were told to check out this idea in Washington. They attempted to do this, and, of course, people laughed in their faces. They were just terribly off the mark.

Q: I think that for the whole [U. S.] Foreign Service we had a hard time explaining Watergate. This was...

HUMMEL: And the whole idea of the separation of powers, the prerogatives of Congress and those of the Executive Branch. They had to start from scratch, because they had grown up with stereotyped, Marxist ideas of what the Americans were like.

Q: In your contacts with the Chinese Communists in Washington, did you find that there was an "educational period"-a deliberate effort made to get the Chinese diplomats here to understand how our system worked?

HUMMEL: I can't say that there was a deliberate effort on my part or that of the State Department. They were learning themselves. They were reading our newspapers all the time. When they asked us questions, or when a particular problem came up, we'd do our best to explain the background of it, particularly when it involved trade issues, which always brought in Congress. We'd have to go back to them and explain what Congress could and could not do and what the prerogatives of the Executive Branch were.

When they first showed up as a Liaison Office here in Washington, we had not settled the "claims and assets" problem, on both sides. We had done a lot of work on it and we continued to work on it-collecting information from Americans who had claims against China for expropriated property. We asked the Chinese to tell us what they thought that we owed them-in sequestered bank accounts and so on.

We were preparing for-and I was very conscious of this-a time when we would switch diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to the Mainland, which, of course, happened during the Carter administration. A solution to the claims and assets problem was a major issue. One of the major considerations was the danger that anything that the Chinese Communists sent to the U. S., such as a Chinese ship or airplane, might be attached by a court order, with a view to settlement of some company's claim against China. I can't remember now how we avoided that, but we couldn't actually guarantee against it. For one thing, we avoided having Chinese ships or aircraft come to the United States, so far as we could. However, we couldn't have done anything except through normal, legal channels-and here again, we had to explain the separation of powers to the Chinese Communists-to quash a sequestration of their Boeing jet aircraft, if that had occurred.

Q: Were there any problems with "defectors": Chinese who came over on exchange programs and refused to return to China or tennis stars? Was this a problem?

HUMMEL: Not a great one. It occurred, and the Chinese Communists would ask that we deport them to China. We would say, "Sorry, but we can't do that." We would then explain the legal basis involved. When the Chinese Communists first arrived in Washington, as their principal host in the State Department, I gave them a welcome. Yes, this welcoming was fun. I can speak quite fluent Chinese. I had already met many of these people on trips to China. It was a nice experience and I enjoyed welcoming them. To welcome the advance party, headed by Han Xu, I gave a dinner at the Cosmos Club for the advance that necessarily included Chinese women guests. I promptly got my knuckles rapped by the Cosmos Club authorities because I used one of the upstairs dining rooms. In those days women were not allowed above the ground floor. This prohibition applied to the very charming young lady interpreter who had to be there. So I got an admonishing letter from the Club. That was trivial, of course.

Not so trivial, because of the suspicions and sensitivities of the Chinese, was an error that infuriated Henry, when I told him about it. I guess I previously mentioned the mistake made about the Chinese Communist flag at the big dinner in the Benjamin Franklin Room on the eighth floor of the State Department, when the Chinese Communist Ambassador, the head of the Chinese Liaison Office, was present. This is the kind of trivial thing which somebody on the Chinese side might decide to exaggerate into a deliberate insult.

Q: You never can explain these things, once they occur.

HUMMEL: When Henry Kissinger learned of it, he was determined that whoever was responsible should be fired" out of the Protocol Department or out of the government. We had to calm Henry down a bit. It was a trivial thing...

Q: But it shows the stuff of which major problems are made.

HUMMEL: Both sides were worried about the relationship. They had many more suspicions on their side than we had.

Q: We've always been overly enthusiastic about the China connection, from the earliest days of the Republic. Did you have problems with the residue of the old "China Lobby"? I'm thinking of Madame Chennault and the "West Coast" capitalists? Did they play any role?

HUMMEL: Oh, yes. The Chinese Nationalists at that time had some 14 Consulates in the United States. These offices could no longer be called Consulates, after the change in recognition. However, when the PRC Liaison Office was here in Washington, we still recognized Taiwan. The Chinese Nationalists saw this whole thing as a zero sum game, which it probably was. Any benefit that the Communist Chinese or Beijing got was detrimental to the interests of the Nationalists. So the Chinese Nationalists loved to make trouble between the United States and Beijing. They held demonstrations with the Nationalist flag near the PRC Liaison Office and they threatened legal action against the liaison office. I think that we partially handled this legal problem by an executive order. Fortunately, nobody tested that in the courts. There was a good deal of tension and attempted sabotage of PRC activities here in Washington.

In fact, prior to that, in New York, a Chinese Communist diplomat was poisoned in his hotel room and died. Although none of us could prove it, we suspected that it was some overzealous Chinese Nationalist agent who had done this, in the belief that this would harm relationships between the United States and Beijing, to the advantage of the Chinese Nationalists. There was some of this going on.

Q: Both times when you served in the Bureau of East Asian Affairs was there concern over Chinese Nationalist intelligence operations in the United States?

HUMMEL: Yes, but I would say frankly that we were also conscious of Chinese Communist intelligence operations. We did our best to penetrate them in various ways. I don't want to go into too much detail on this but I may say that the Chinese Communists were also doing their best to penetrate various aspects of our society, including economic and technological secrets. They were setting up Chinese-Americans for recruitment. This was the same thing that the Chinese Nationalists had been doing for a long time. The Chinese Nationalists had an advantage in that they had so many friends, particularly in the Pentagon, that they could just walk in the front door of the Pentagon and talk to their friends, who were highly anti-communist and somewhat opposed to State Department policy on accommodation or at least coexistence with the PRC. So we had people within our own government who were not marching to the same tune as the Executive Branch.

Q: At the time you were in EA, Gerald Ford was President. Did he play much of a role in foreign policy, or was this pretty much Secretary of State Kissinger, supported by Phil Habib?

HUMMEL: It was Kissinger and Habib. President Ford made a state visit to Mainland China. It was quite successful, but, as everybody knows, Ford was not a particularly intellectual type. Kissinger still maintained the title of National Security Adviser in the White House at the same time that he was Secretary of State. Then he let the White House job go, and Gen Brent Scowcroft took it over. Scowcroft was very close to Henry, so Kissinger felt no threat to his position from the White House. The White House had its own NSC staff, naturally, for policy and keeping the President informed.

Q: Did you go along on the visit by President Ford to Mainland China?

HUMMEL: No. Phil Habib went along, so there was no point in my going. I remember that he went along because he borrowed my white tie and tails and morning coat outfit that I had had to buy when, of all places, I was in Taiwan. Chiang Kai-shek insisted on punctilious dress. So Habib wore my clothes in Beijing.

Q: During the time that we have been talking about, when you were in the EA Bureau, had the Vietnam-China relationship turned sour and were they fighting each other on the Sino-Vietnamese border?

HUMMEL: No, that didn't happen until 1979-shortly after we switched recognition from the Chinese Nationalists to the Chinese Communists.

Q: Is there anything else that we might talk about concerning China or anything else concerning East Asia during this time frame? If not, I thought that we might stop.

HUMMEL: I'll think about anything that I might add.

Q: Obviously, there are other issues that might be covered. ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations] is one such subject. How did that work out?

HUMMEL: We had good relationships with the ASEAN countries, collectively and individually. We tried to stimulate and support them. We tried to avoid doing things that would split them. I think that our attitude was very constructive. Some people wanted us to try to promote a military dimension for this organization, which then consisted of five countries Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines. I always resisted that, partly because I wasn't sure of exactly how we could do it, but mostly because it was far too early for them to be considering such a relationship among themselves. Tensions between these countries still existed. Indonesia at one time had a "konfrontasi" confrontation with Malaysia. Indonesian policy toward Singapore and Malaysia was seriously aimed at taking over both of those countries. These problems had not entirely subsided. The Philippines had a serious problem with Malaysia over Sabah, former British North Borneo, which was also next door to Indonesia.

We did have some debate over this issue. I remember that Bill Sullivan, who was Ambassador to the Philippines at the time, got quite angry with me because I refused to try to stimulate a military dimension for ASEAN.

Q: There may be something else we may wish to discuss on this period of your career when you were concerned with East Asian affairs, but we'll start next time when you were in Pakistan, 1977-1981.

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Q: Today is March 6, 1995. You mentioned that you had thought of something that you wished to add.

HUMMEL: This must have been in the summer of 1976-before our presidential election. Phil Habib was about to leave his job as Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, for health reasons. Larry Eagleburger passed me a note at a meeting in the Operations Center "Tank" classified conference room, where we were being briefed by some CIA people. His note asked me if I wanted to be considered on the list of candidates to replace Phil Habib in that job. I promptly wrote a brief note back to him, saying essentially that I thought that I was a really first rate Ambassador abroad. I said that I felt that I had been fairly good in the position of Assistant Secretary, which I held at the time I was writing the note, after having been Acting Assistant Secretary for so long. However, I said that I thought that the position of Under Secretary for Political Affairs was beyond me, and I didn't want to be a candidate for that job.

I think that I explained this later on and in more detail to Larry. I think that this job involved too many things that I didn't know anything about. I didn't know much about European affairs. I'm terribly weak on European history. I haven't any background in nuclear arms control negotiations. I didn't know all of the cast of characters of senior Foreign Service Officers I would have to deal with. I thought that this was just too much for me to learn about quickly or to handle well.

Q: It makes sense to know what one's strengths are and areas where one isn't as strong. Too often people move into things and find that they may be able to do the job but that they are not making the contribution that they could in another position.

HUMMEL: Well, I still think that Larry was just doing me a courtesy. I don't think that I was ever a serious candidate for the job.

Q: I wonder if you might want to make a more general comment at this point [on senior assignments]. I'm speaking at this point basically as an overseas consular officer. I never really served in the "seats of the mighty" in Washington but I've observed the performance of my Foreign Service colleagues. I saw Larry Eagleburger at a junior level in the State Department and others. Did you tend to "sort out" the Foreign Service Officers who were "hard chargers," people who were very effective as staff assistants and personal assistants? Did you see a difference between officers in terms of their effectiveness?

HUMMEL: Yes, very much so. There was a strong group-I don't know, maybe one-fourth of the whole corps, though maybe not that many-who were young and keen and just seemed to have more drive than others. These officers weren't afraid to stick their necks out and make suggestions. They just seemed to be smarter and more vigorous than many others. There is a large number-and this has been a chronic complaint about the Foreign Service-who just seem to be too passive, who don't want to stick their necks out, who have a cultural bias against it. You have to invite their contributions out of them, instead of having them come forward.

Q: Do you feel that this is endemic to the system, or is this just a general situation? If you take a normal group of "bright people," you find that only a limited number of them really have "that certain something."

HUMMEL: I don't know enough about the business world and the outside world. I do know something about the university world, but that is a quite different situation. I suspect that the business world finds the same differentiation between the go getters and doers and those who are more passive.

Let me add something. It occurs to me that I did not raise this matter earlier, as I should have done. The transition from me to Dick Holbrooke as Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs. I stepped down in January, 1977, when President Carter came in.

Q: January 20, 1977.

HUMMEL: That's right. I have already described how, after the 1976 elections, we all knew that we were going to be out of office. Henry Kissinger asked all of us if we were going to get new jobs. We Foreign Service Officers didn't have to worry about that because we were in a career system that would get us new assignments.

During the transition period [between administrations] I was in close touch with the transition team of the Carter administration. However, the eventual Assistant Secretary of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Dick Holbrooke, was not terribly visible in the transition team. We prepared all kinds of papers, we conducted oral briefings of people who might want to be briefed, outlining a host of positions in the EA area, including the China situation, on which I personally briefed the new Ambassador, Leonard Woodcock. He did a fine job out in China. He managed the negotiations for diplomatic recognition in 1979 on behalf of the Carter administration.

During all of this time and after, when I was still in Washington, waiting to go out first to Manila and then to Pakistan, Holbrooke would never meet with me at any time. He didn't want to talk to me. I had known him, and we had shaken hands during the transition, but I was really pissed off. Apparently, he didn't want his image to be sullied by fraternizing with the Republican team. So I never had a chance to talk to him about taking over the Bureau, never was able to give hints about who was a strong officer, and who was not.

Q: So it was a confrontational type of thing from his point of view?

HUMMEL: Yes. I will never forgive him or forget this. He absolutely refused to meet with me. I talked with him on the phone. I said, "For God's sake, Dick, let's have lunch." So we would set up a lunch, and his secretary would cancel it. We never met. It was peculiar.

Q: Let's move to your time in Pakistan. You mentioned that your assignment as Ambassador to the Philippines fell through, because of your friend, Carlos Romulo. You agreed to go to Pakistan in 1977. Was there any problem in your going to Pakistan, either in getting assignment or obtaining approval from the Senate?

HUMMEL: No. This was handled on a pro forma basis.

Q: You went at a very interesting time. Did you know that you were going for what would be, in Joseph Grew's term, "a turbulent era" in Pakistan, or not?

HUMMEL: No. The first 10 days that I was in Pakistan were absolutely sensational for me. I arrived at a time when Mohammed Ali Bhutto was under very heavy fire from virtually the whole country for having rigged recently-held elections.

Q: We're talking about June, 1977.

HUMMEL: Late June and July, yes. The election, as I recall, had been held in March, 1977. Henry Byroade was Ambassador at that time. Bhutto had no reason to rig the election, but he did, and he more or less was caught at it. A large number of people-virtually the whole country-rose up, objected, and demonstrated. Bhutto gave ground slowly, over a period of weeks, before I arrived. He had already agreed to hold new elections, which was an admission of some sort. He was negotiating with a group of powerful moguls and political leaders about the terms of the new elections, who would be in charge, and so on. During this period, by the way, he used a sort of Senator Joseph McCarthy tactic of waving a letter from Ambassador Byroade which, he claimed, demonstrated American interference and pressure on Pakistan.

Q: He'd done this before, hadn't he?

HUMMEL: Byroade was sickened by this because he had very successfully made a practice of developing a close relationship with various heads of state. He had done this with Marcos in the Philippines, for example, and in Afghanistan as well. Anyway, Bhutto had his hands full, saving his own career. He was negotiating, as I said, with people who opposed him about the terms of new elections. I arrived during this time, and Bhutto was exceedingly busy. I presented my credentials to the President of Pakistan, who was a nonentity. Bhutto was Prime Minister and really ran the country. Presenting credentials in Pakistan, by the way, was quite a colorful experience because it was done in the British style, with a carriage and a mounted guard...

Q: Lancers and pennants and all that...

HUMMEL: In Ethiopia it was quite colorful, also. Even though the Emperor was gone, they maintained a lot of the pomp from a former time and of the same sort.

Anyway, I presented my credentials in Pakistan. I had no particular problems. I was beginning to call on the various cabinet ministers who were able to see me. Within a week of my presentation of credentials our Fourth of July reception came up. The normal drill in Pakistan was to have a "vin d'honneur" at noontime, with just the diplomatic chiefs of mission and government officials invited. You played the two national anthems and stood there with the President of the country and gave toasts. I was told that Bhutto might not be able to come to my National Day "vin d'honneur." He was a crucial figure there and confrontational toward the United States, but couldn't come unless I had called on him beforehand.

So we were all on tenterhooks, including a lot of Pakistanis who really wanted US relations to be repaired. Bhutto was terribly-and genuinely-busy. At 2:30 AM on July 4 I finally saw Bhutto by driving down from Islamabad to Rawalpindi. They are about 15 miles apart. I was invited to call on him at his residence. In our conversation I told him that I didn't want to discuss past frictions between Pakistan and the United States. I just wanted him to know that I hoped that we could begin again from my arrival in the country. I said that the American Government had nothing to do with internal Pakistani political affairs. I hoped that we could put all of that behind us and start on a new relationship. He seemed to want to do that. He was cordial and spent a half hour with me. That was it. I said goodbye at 3:00 AM on July 4. At noontime the same day Bhutto came to the "vin d'honneur" and very ostentatiously spent all of his time talking with the Soviet Ambassador! General Zia, the chief of staff of the Pakistani Army, was there, as well as other, senior Army officers. At 10:00 PM, still July 4 Gen Zia launched a military coup d'etat, arrested Bhutto, and took over the country, promising immediate elections which, of course, were not held for years. So all of these things happened at one time or another on July 4, 1977! It was an epitome of the chaos which Pakistan was going through.

Q: Just to back up a bit. Before you went out to Pakistan, you were now in a different bureau in the State Department-the NEA [Near Eastern Affairs] Bureau, rather than EA. You must have been briefed prior to your departure. What were the views at that time of the Country Director and desk officers for Pakistan on Bhutto, where Pakistan was going, and the situation in general?

HUMMEL: I don't think that any of them had any particularly unusual views on those subjects. I think that we all figured that Bhutto was likely to find a way to survive, that new elections would probably bring him a plurality, and that he would remain in office, although I don't think that anybody was sure of this. The tension that caused the coup was the real possibility of a split and the prospect of a kind of civil war of some sort. The four provinces of Pakistan, Baluchistan, Northwest Frontier, Punjab, and Sindh: are quite different. Bhutto came from Sindh Province. The military, by and large, came from the Punjab, which is in the northeastern part of the country.

I had an absolutely first rate DCM, Peter Constable. I was always extremely lucky in that respect. He knew the area and Pakistan extremely well. By the time I arrived and had presented my credentials, we knew that the situation was extremely dicey. Nobody was willing to say exactly what they thought would happen. When I was in Washington, before going out to Pakistan, I think that the NEA Bureau did not have quite this sense of crisis.

Q: What about Bhutto? Was he considered some sort of Krishna Menon type of person? Did he detest the United States, was he accustomed to using this country as something of a whipping boy, or was he an opportunist? Did you get any feeling of where Bhutto stood, ideologically?

HUMMEL: He was certainly not a Leftist. He did not really have any interest in cozying- up to the Soviet Union. He was basically an opportunist and was a very strong Pakistani nationalist. He was very smart but completely ruthless. After he was arrested, he was tried for murder and convicted. He appealed his sentence, and the appeal was considered in an orderly way, according to the British style judicial system in effect in Pakistan. He was eventually executed. Even his devoted followers in the Progressive People's Party (PPP) would say to me and to other diplomats privately, "Of course he ordered these executions. We know that. Everybody knows that. But that's the way we expect our leaders to behave here." He had been doing this for years. He was found out to have kidnapped and to have sent off secretly to concentration camps other political leaders whom he didn't like. He had other people murdered as well. There is no question that he was guilty of murder and of ordering people to be murdered. This is what he was tried for.

However, at the time when he was about to be executed, the United States Government and others made genuine efforts to...

Q: He was executed on April 4, 1979.

HUMMEL: Yes. A little less than two years after he was tried and convicted of murder. Legal procedures were followed. We strongly urged General Zia not to execute him but to commute his sentence to life imprisonment. Zia didn't want to do that, and I can understand this. He didn't want to have this potentially explosive person in a jail anyplace where his followers might succeed in getting him out. He might die in jail, and Zia would be accused of killing him in secret. Anyway, our pleas didn't do any good.

Q: Where did the pleas come from? Why were we pleading with Zia to spare Bhutto's life?

HUMMEL: They were on behalf of his friends. By the way, you asked if he was anti-American. This anti-American slant only showed up when he was in such dire trouble after he'd rigged the elections in the spring of 1977. Before that he'd been a relatively close friend of the United States. He would show his independence from time to time, but there was no anti-American tinge to him before that.

Q: When you went out to Pakistan in June, 1977, what did you consider your major goals? What did America want from Pakistan at that time?

HUMMEL: Basically, we wanted to help make sure that Pakistan survived and that there was peace in South Asia. There had already been three wars between Pakistan and India. In each case, I think it's fair to say, Pakistan started them. After Bangladesh, which previously had been part of Pakistan, split off and became independent, Pakistan was far weaker than India, militarily, politically, and otherwise, because of the fragile nature of the state, the weakness of the relations between the different provinces, and the fact that nobody was trying seriously to split the country by supporting Provincial independence. The strongest thing that held Pakistan together was Islam.

However, Bhutto was really an expert at manipulating the political situation. He'd been around for a long time. He'd survived in the opposition during the time of Ayub Khan, the military dictator who was in charge in Pakistan for a long time. I thoroughly agreed with the Pakistanis who said, "Yes, of course he was guilty of murder. This is what we expect of our leaders."

Q: When you were going out to Pakistan, did you sense any bias within the NEA Bureau, either toward India or toward Pakistan?

HUMMEL: There was perhaps some pro-India bias, I think, because India did have a true, democratic system, and Pakistan had been in and out of having a democratic system. General Zia took over in a coup and was no longer democratic. Of course, in NEA they didn't know that that was going to happen. Also, we had lost any direct treaty relationship with Pakistan through CENTO, Central Treaty Organization, formerly the Baghdad Pact, which had included Pakistan. CENTO collapsed of its own weight when the Shah of Iran died. We were supplying Pakistan with arms. I should add that we were not the principal supplier of arms to Pakistan.

After the war that broke East Pakistan loose and created Bangladesh, the Pakistanis were terrified that India's military forces suddenly became a far greater threat because half of Pakistan's territory and armed services had been taken away. They also lost an enormous amount of equipment. The Chinese Communists jumped in at that point and supplied a lot of fighter aircraft, tanks, and other types of equipment. This helped to create a deterrent to whatever adventurism may have existed in India. And there were signs that some people in India-not so much in the Indian military services themselves, but elsewhere-would like to bring an end to Pakistan. There was even some such feeling in the military and among some militant Hindus who wanted to solve the Pakistan problem once and for all by invading the country and breaking it up.

That could have happened. During the war which led to Bangladeshi independence, Kissinger and others had moved an American aircraft carrier into the Indian Ocean as a signal to deter India from undertaking the final dissolution of Pakistan. India had the military power to do this.

Our national sympathies, intellectually and generally, were with India. However, our purely strategic view was that Pakistan needed our support to maintain a balance and so that there would not be a disastrous war between India and Pakistan.

Q: The Carter administration had just entered office. This was an administration controlled by the Democratic Party, which in very rough terms seems to lean toward India. The Carter administration sort of embraced India. President Carter's mother had been a Peace Corps volunteer at an advanced age in India. The Republicans seemed to like Pakistan a little more as a military led and more anti-communist country. Did you feel any of that?

HUMMEL: The Pakistanis used to say exactly that. You have that just right. They would say that Democratic administrations in Washington would prefer India, and Republicans would prefer Pakistan. They felt this-and there was quite a bit of truth in it.

Q: Let's follow through a bit on this. Who was the Ambassador in India, in New Delhi, when you were Ambassador in Pakistan?

HUMMEL: Bob Goheen. He had been born in India, had been President of Princeton, was a very capable and nice guy, and did a good job in Delhi. I remember that on at least two occasions he made speeches which infuriated the Pakistanis. In these speeches he asserted that fundamental American interests dictated that the United States must have a better relation with India than with Pakistan. He didn't quite say it this way, but he seemed to say that everybody knows that we prefer India. This, of course, didn't help me any. I managed-correctly, with Washington's help-to make some public statements which balanced off what Ambassador Goheen had said. This is an illustration that there was some truth in what Goheen said. Many Americans prefer India over turbulent, Islamic Pakistan.

Q: Well, India is perhaps more fun. At the same time I would have thought that many of the attitudes of the Indian Government would have just outraged Americans. They were playing this game of cozying-up to the Soviets and getting Soviet equipment. One always had the feeling that this was not a real alliance but one more or less intended to make them look better on the world stage. Maybe this was done for domestic, political reasons. From your position were you hearing concern about India and the Soviets?

HUMMEL: Yes. But the Indians were extremely clever at playing these games, particularly Indira Gandhi, for the purpose of having a few external enemies to point at. She particularly wanted to have China as an external enemy, as well as us. We were absolutely certain that she was being fed plain disinformation by pro-Soviet Indian advisers about alleged, tinkering by CIA in Indian internal affairs and so forth. There were an awful lot of convinced, pro-Soviet people in India. She loved to publicize these accusations. Our relationship with India was stormy. At the same time the relations between the American Ambassador and the Indians, as well as between the American Consulates General in Calcutta and Bombay and local Indian people were very smooth and very friendly. Indians do have a liking for Americans.

Q: Was there a pretty good exchange of views between our two Embassies in New Delhi and Islamabad?

HUMMEL: Yes, there was. Both Embassies made special efforts to make sure that our political officers, in particular, went back and forth on TDY (Temporary Duty) trips. I think that I said earlier that I reinvented the idea that I had in East Africa to have a regional Chief of Mission conference, set up in the same way, conspiring among ourselves. We included Iran, where Bill Sullivan was the Ambassador, and all of the South Asian countries.

Q: That would be Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan.

HUMMEL: Plus Nepal and Ceylon, Sri Lanka. Those meetings were a lot of fun. We had one meeting in Kathmandu, another one in Colombo Sri Lanka, and one in Delhi. We had at least three, as I recall. Anyway, this was a way of maintaining contact and personal relationships among the Ambassadors and Embassies. We all deliberately fostered this.

Q: Basically, when General Zia took over after the coup d'etat, what was our immediate reaction? This always comes up after a coup: do you recognize it and how do you deal with the new government?

HUMMEL: We solved that problem years before. There is a Latin American doctrine which covers this. I think it is the "Estrada Doctrine." Under this doctrine you don't have to decide whether to recognize the new government. You deal with the entity in power and don't have to make an agonizing decision of approval or disapproval. This doctrine originated in Latin America, where it comes up often. We didn't have to say that we recognized and approved of Zia's coup.

Q: How did the Embassy respond to the coup? You were newly arrived in the Embassy and you had a knowledgeable DCM...

HUMMEL: Don't forget the Political Section, too, which was very knowledgeable.

Q: When you have a coup, all hell is breaking loose.

HUMMEL: Not really, because this coup was bloodless. If there had been actual fighting, that would have been something else. Things were surprisingly smooth and calm. Once again, as was the case when President Marcos took over in the Philippines, much of the population heaved a sigh of relief. Things had calmed down, and there was not going to be a civil war. The confrontation was over. Many people believed General Zia's promise that they would have elections. He said, at first, "By September," 1977, which, of course, was totally unrealistic. Then he reneged on all of those promises for a very long time, although he did hold elections toward the end of his tenure, before he was killed in an airplane accident, along with our Ambassador. That was in 1990, or something like that.

Q: Was there any interruption in normal relations with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs?

HUMMEL: None at all. The Pakistani Ministry of Foreign Affairs was staffed by professionals who had been around for a long time, with foreign assignments and then periods of duty back in Pakistan. They had the remnants of the really first class Indian Civil Service, a class of people with very good educations who staffed a lot of the ministerial and lower ranking positions.

Q: How about the nuclear issue while you were there?

HUMMEL: That came up a year later.

Q: There had been something about the French being involved just before you arrived in Pakistan.

HUMMEL: Our relevant legislation changed over a period of time, but we cut off aid to Pakistan in 1978, because, as you say, of their intention to purchase a French nuclear reprocessing plant. They said they didn't have a reprocessing plant and needed one. We said that they didn't need it, and we were right. We cut off both military and AID assistance, except for some humanitarian aid. That didn't destroy the relationship between Pakistan and the United States. Zia and the Pakistanis hoped that we would change our legislation and come back. They had a point when they said, "Look at India. The US hasn't done anything about India's nuclear explosion," which is true. The Pakistanis at that time didn't have the means to make any kind of nuclear device. India had exploded a nuclear device already, claiming that it was a "peaceful nuclear explosion." The United States had done nothing whatever about that, because our legislation was crafted in a way that talked about the introduction of suspect nuclear equipment. Well, India didn't introduce anything. India did it all by itself, by diverting nuclear material and violating some of their agreements, particularly with Canada. However, the Pakistanis would say, "Look, we didn't do anything like the Indian bomb. Why are you terminating aid to us, even if what you say is true about our secret nuclear plans? We're still far from having a weapon." That was very hard to answer.

Q: What was the impact of cutting off our aid-particularly military aid? Did this turn the Pakistanis more toward Communist China?

HUMMEL: Strangely enough, no. They've had ambivalent ideas about Communist China, even though China's been very steadfast in maintaining their support for Pakistan. Chinese material has continued to come into Pakistan. The Pakistani military gradually took a few steps backward from the American military, with which they always used to have extremely close relations. But when we terminated [military] aid, it was harder for us to learn about mundane things like force readiness, what kinds of small arms they were using, and the state of their supplies. This was because the Pakistanis didn't want to tell us. We knew from our own sources that there was a lively trade in military equipment going on, and the Chinese Communists were supplying it, at low prices. They provided a lot of things that we had supplied previously. One thing the Chinese Communists could not do was provide good fighter aircraft. However, the Pakistanis were not too badly off.

Q: Looking at your period of assignment in Pakistan, I note that there were a couple of major events. You might divide your tour of duty into the time when you had the coup, which happened just after you arrived. Then you had the upsurge of Islamic fundamentalism, which came about because of events which had also occurred in Iran.

HUMMEL: That came very gradually. I always felt that his handling of Islamic fundamentalism was a basic mistake on the part of General Zia. He didn't have to do that, and I don't think that he really believed that a Muslim-controlled Sharia court system should govern the whole economic and political life of the country.

Q: The Sharia means Islamic law.

HUMMEL: In fact, it was Bhutto who did two things to bow to his Islamic critics, during his last weeks in power. He abolished all gambling, which meant the abolition of horse racing. Horses are a big thing in Pakistan and India. That put a lot of people out of jobs, and nobody wanted that. He also abolished alcohol. It was Bhutto that did that-not General Zia-as a sop to his Islamic critics. That was well known to be highly hypocritical, since Bhutto was known as a heavy drinker and didn't stop drinking even after he had prohibited the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages. There was a creeping emphasis on Islamic law, but this tendency moved very slowly. General Zia was basically using this emphasis on Islamic law to retain his power and keep up a good relationship with the Islamic leaders, the Muslim clerics of the country. He did that rather well. His actions had the desired effect, because he was taking slow steps toward Islamization. They did put heavy emphasis on tithing by everybody. That's what good Muslims are supposed to do.

The problem of how to deal with the collection of interest in banking has always bothered the Islamic clergy. However, they used euphemisms for interest. When you loan somebody some money, you, in effect, went into partnership with the borrower. The borrower would give you part of the profits of the partnership. You didn't call it interest. However, it amounted to the same thing, and the banks generally operated in a normal way.

Q: What about reporting by the Embassy? It seems that one of the hardest places to "crack" in countries with a rather strong, fundamentalist Islamic element is to be able to talk to religious leaders. Was this a problem in Pakistan?

HUMMEL: Yes, it was. It's very difficult for Western Christians to have a good dialogue with them. In one sense, according to traditionalist, Islamic thinking, Jews and Christians are also "people of the Book." That is, we share a common heritage in the Old Testament. We split over the issue of whether Jesus Christ was the final prophet or not. But Muslims agree that he was a real prophet. However, of course they believe that Mohammed was the greatest prophet of all. The Muslims also adhere to the ban on eating pork and shellfish, among other things. So there was kind of an affinity. There wasn't always an antipathy. But it was very difficult to get close to the Muslim clergy. Honestly, we just didn't have the background to be able to discuss Islamic law with these people. We just didn't have the people with the right training for it. Also, this was viewed as a sideline in a geopolitical sense.

After General Zia took over, Zia was the person who was concerned. I developed a relatively close personal relationship with him. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan took place in about the middle period of my tenure in Pakistan.

Q: That was in December, 1979. Christmas Day, I think.

HUMMEL: Yes. Before that the leader in Afghanistan, Daud, had had a too close relationship with the Soviets. The Pakistanis very cleverly drew him closer and closer to themselves. He became much more cooperative with Pakistan and with the United States toward the end of his time in power. Then came a Leftist coup d'etat in which Daud was killed. My good friend, the Afghani Ambassador to Pakistan, happened to be in Kabul at the time. He was put in prison and killed, along with a lot of others. The reaction in Pakistan to these events in Afghanistan was very sharp. A lot of Pakistanis had little regard for the leftist group which had seized power in Afghanistan-particularly the Muslim clergy, who didn't like them at all. There was considerable tension there.

Then came the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan to prevent the overthrow and dissolution of the leftist, pro-Soviet government in Kabul. The Soviets said that they had been invited in. No doubt they were, by their own supporters. That happened in December, 1979.

Just before that, however-to skip back a little, and I should have said this earlier-came the storming of our Embassy in Tehran in the fall of 1979.

Q: This was in November, 1979.

HUMMEL: A couple of weeks after that a mob burned our American Embassy in Pakistan.

Q: Can you give us, in narrative form, how the Embassy was operating and how you saw the country operating? First of all, let's talk about the reaction in Pakistan to events in Iran, prior to the takeover of our Embassy.

HUMMEL: With the departure of the Shah, the Pakistanis were quite worried about the situation, as were we. I was not close enough to events in Iran really to appreciate the kind of thing that happened when Ayatollah Khomeini returned from exile. In Iran the whole country turned sharply against the Shah. The Shah was seriously ill and left the country. We didn't have an Ambassador there. Bill Sullivan had left some time previously. The rise of Shi'a Islam-in its fundamentalist form-scared the Pakistanis quite a bit.

Q: The Pakistanis are mostly Sunni, I believe.

HUMMEL: Mostly Sunni, but there is a substantial Shia minority in Pakistan. That's always been a problem in Pakistan, as it has in many Muslim countries-the clash of doctrines between Sunni and Shia. Pakistan was mainstream Islam, and the Sunnis didn't like to watch the fundamentalist Shia taking over in Iran. Combined with the turmoil in Afghanistan, the Pakistanis saw that their regional situation was deteriorating. They had always thought that India was hostile-and to some extent that was correct. Then to have Afghanistan and Iran, both of whom have borders with Pakistan, turning away from them...

Q: This is before the storming of the Embassy in Tehran. Were we beginning to look harder at Pakistan, seeing it as more of a bastion of our interests?

HUMMEL: Yes, that's right. Let me discuss first the storming of the Embassy in Tehran. Then we'll come back to our own situation. The Carter administration gave a kind of non-response to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. This disturbed me. I think that it was about two weeks after our Embassy staff in Tehran were blindfolded, locked up, and mistreated so publicly that, all of a sudden, and without warning, as I was driving home from the Embassy to my residence for lunch-a distance of about a mile and a half...

Q: You mean on November 11, 1979, wasn't it?

HUMMEL: I saw busloads of men shaking their fists, leaning out the windows, and going toward the Embassy as I was leaving. As soon as I got home, I got on the phone and said to my Administrative Counselor, "something is happening. You'd better button up the Embassy." They did this, extremely well. They locked the gates. We had a first rate Administrative Officer who turned out to be a real hero.

Q: Who was that?

HUMMEL: Dave Fields. He later became head of security in the Department and then went off as an Ambassador.

Q: We can fill this in later.

HUMMEL: Anyway, everything went like clockwork, as far as the internal arrangements inside the Embassy Chancery were concerned. The Embassy compound was a large, walled area, comprising the Chancery, a half-finished and unoccupied Ambassadorial Residence-the walls had still not been completed-an American Club, including a swimming pool, and apartments for single officers, as well as outbuildings. It was quite an establishment.

The reason for the demonstration, it turned out, was that word was broadcast over the local radio that Americans and Israelis had occupied the Holy Places in Mecca. It turned out later that the Holy Places had been occupied by a bunch of Saudi religious fanatics. They had to be driven out and were virtually all killed-about 200 of them. However, we never could figure out and could not find, in all of the reporting, intercepts, and everything else, the source of the rumor that swept through Pakistan-that it was the Americans and the Israelis who had occupied the Holy Places in Mecca.

That, of course, set everybody off. Immediately and spontaneously, people commandeered buses and trucks. In addition to that, there was a small group of Palestinians who had probably been planning some kind of action against our Embassy, anyway, because they arrived at the Embassy compound with hoses for siphoning gasoline out of tanks, pails to put the gasoline in, and grappling hooks with ropes already attached to them. They knew what they were doing and they did it pretty well. With a lot of manpower you can pull almost any fence or wall down, which they did.

At the same time I was on the telephone, calling everybody frantically, including General Zia, asking for help. About 50 police arrived very quickly in two buses. They were promptly overwhelmed by the mob, and their weapons were taken away from them. One of the weapons, a rifle, was used to shoot one of our Marine Guards, who had been on the roof, according to people who were watching. The Marine Guard was shot in the head and eventually died, hours later.

It turned out that General Zia, whom I couldn't talk to for some time, was touring Rawalpindi which, as I said, is 15 miles away. Most of the available troops were in plain clothes and standing around the streets, making sure that General Zia didn't get hurt. So there were no armed forces available nearby ready to saddle up and come the 15 miles to Islamabad. Furthermore, I realized that there was a strong disinclination to use Pakistani troops to kill Pakistani civilians in the streets, on behalf of the United States. It should have been clear to everybody that the United States was not guilty of this alleged violation of the Holy Places in Mecca. Anyhow, to cut a long story short...

Q: Don't cut it short.

HUMMEL: I was in my residence. I had three different telephone lines. One of them was taken up, talking to people in Washington who, in turn, were calling the Pakistani Ambassador in Washington. The Pakistani Embassy in Washington was calling Pakistani Government officials, as I was calling the Foreign Ministry. I was also trying to reach General Zia. I was on the phone to other officers in the Embassy who were not in the Embassy. And I was also in direct touch with the Embassy, until the phone line finally broke down. Then a very courageous Pakistani phone operator stayed on duty while the Embassy was being burned.

The Embassy compound was stormed by between 2,500 to 3,000 people-young, active men. They overwhelmed the police. In the compound the apartment buildings and the American Club were never stormed-which I'll come to in a minute. They overwhelmed the Chancery, going right up to the gates. All safes inside the Chancery were locked by that time. This had been done very quickly and very efficiently. This was one of the first things they were deviling me about from Washington because they recalled how the classified documents had been compromised in Tehran. Initially, I didn't know but was told on the phone that the staff had locked up all the safes. Actually, it was Deputy Secretary Warren Christopher who said, "We have to know" that the safes were locked. I didn't think that that was the first priority.

Anyway, it turned out that everything had been done according to the rules. Some arms were issued to CIA people who had had weapons training. And, as I said, there was the hero Administrative Officer, who had had military training. They retreated slowly up the four stories in the Chancery as the mob was coming in, until they reached what turned out to be a "safe haven" in the Communications Vault. The Communications Vault had a trap door up onto the roof, through which they eventually managed to escape. However, there were attackers on the roof as well, who were firing down air vents with their weapons.

Then the rioters began to burn the building. The whole building burned. It is incredible how a building made of brick and cement can actually go up in flames that way. I suppose that with enough gasoline you can do anything. The Marine Guards fired tear gas to slow down the attackers, but it didn't deter them. There didn't seem to be any way to stop them.

All of this began, I suppose, around 1:00 PM. It ended at about 6:30 PM. By that time there were about 50 members of our Embassy staff crammed into the Communications Vault. The floor was getting so hot that it was very uncomfortable to sit on, since the building was burning. Dusk was coming on, and the attackers just sort of faded away. We were never quite sure why. There wasn't any substantial military or police rescue effort until just later. The group in the Communications Vault opened up the trap door to the roof. There was a makeshift ladder leading to a lower roof and then another makeshift ladder leading down to the ground. The American staff rallied about a half mile away in the British Embassy compound. That's where I went to see them.

I had left my residence I was afraid that my wife and I would be a target. It was only a couple of blocks away from the Foreign Ministry. I stayed at my residence, on the phone all the time, until about 4:30 PM and then went directly to the Foreign Ministry, where I dumped myself on them, pounding the table and demanding protection for the Chancery. I had with me one of the Military Attaches. Another key person was the CIA Chief of Station who managed to get to the British Embassy where he could observe our compound with his binoculars. He was the one who reported that the attackers seemed to have left the roof of our Chancery, which enabled our staff to escape from the Communications Vault.

Meanwhile, down below, inside the Embassy compound, there was in addition to the burning Chancery, the American Club and the American staff apartments. People in the club and the apartments-about 15 of them-who went out into the open, because things were burning, were surrounded by this irate mob, were spat on and shouted at but not struck. They were surrounded by a small group of Pakistani police, who did their job very courageously. They fended off the mob of people who appeared to be about to attack the women and children. I should have said that first. That was terribly harrowing for them all. As I said, nobody was harmed there, and eventually the mob melted away.

Another incident happened at the International School-known locally as the American School. It was three miles away in a deserted part of town. Some young toughs went out there, apparently to harass the kids. One very good friend of mine, a retired Pakistani colonel, had gone from his house to the school, fearing something like this. He just harangued these people, telling them, "Get the hell out of here, you stupid fools" and so on, in Urdu. He persuaded them, or just chased them out of the school compound, so that nothing happened to the school.

Nothing happened at the other American residences, either, which were scattered around town. This could easily have been different.

I should say that two Americans died: the Marine who was shot in the head on the roof of the Chancery and died three or four hours later in the Communications Vault. An American military attaché died in his apartment inside the compound, which had burned. His burned corpse was found-nobody knows quite what happened and whether they had planned to kill him and burned or shot him. Two Pakistani employees of the Embassy died, fleeing from the Chancery building. They were killed by the mob.

Q: It sounds as if the best response to an attacking mob is not to fire on them but retreat and avoid further inciting the mob. It sounds as if there was good discipline in the Embassy.

HUMMEL: It was really good.

Q: The tendency [by most people] would be to open fire on the mob.

HUMMEL: Well, the Marine Guards operated under the instructions of the Security Officer and this very capable, Administrative Officer. They followed their instructions. You fire only to protect life.

Q: But I would have thought that it is really dicey where...

HUMMEL: But if you have a mob of 2,000 people out there, which one do you fire at? And what are you going to do when the rest of them get angry and swarm over you? So there was really a good deal of discipline.

Q: What was the aftermath to this?

HUMMEL: One of the first things that happened was that we were ordered to downsize the Embassy and evacuate all dependents. This process went off remarkably smoothly. We had a security network operating, and that worked very well to notify outlying American citizens living in outlying areas. My wife and I had American citizens sleeping all over the floor in our residence. Other people also had people staying with them-taking care of them and feeding them.

Pan American Airways, acted with its usual alacrity. Pan Am has always been excellent at helping Embassies. Somewhere they found a Boeing 747 aircraft and sent it to the airport in Islamabad. On the morning after these events, we were all so shocked that we didn't know quite how to behave. Everybody was disoriented. However, not long afterwards, early on the second or third morning after these events we mounted a convoy and went out to the airport with a Pakistani military escort. The whole group being evacuated went aboard the Boeing 747 and flew off to Washington, where they, with much help from my wife, formed an evacuees support group which, I think, worked very well, indeed. I credit my wife with a lot of leadership in that respect.

Now, the Pakistani reaction was to be terribly shamefaced about the whole thing, because there was a complete misunderstanding. There was no reason for attacking the American Embassy. As I said, we never found out who started the rumor that the Americans were responsible for the desecration of the Muslim Holy Places in Mecca. However, within about two weeks I had in my hand, delivered by the Pakistani Foreign Ministry, two checks amounting to US\$21 million-part in U. S. and part in local currency. That was our estimate of the cost of rehabilitating the Embassy. They acted about as quickly as they could.

I must say that I was very annoyed that I could never get any ranking Pakistani official-civilian or military-to come and inspect the Embassy compound. I wanted to rub their noses in it. They didn't want to come. They didn't want to have their picture taken. They just didn't want to have anything to do with it.

Q: Were any people put on trial for involvement in this?

HUMMEL: No, they never got around to it. They said that they couldn't identify [who was involved]. There was no way to identify them. We had no photos [of what had happened]. I know that they could have identified some of them. The police who were protecting our dependents, out in the open, must have known and could have fingered some of those responsible.

Q: How about the Palestinian students? Were they involved?

HUMMEL: No. The whole thing was swept under the rug as fast as they could do it. They didn't want a public affirmation of guilt or an apology.

Q: What about the reaction of the people you normally dealt with in Pakistani society?

HUMMEL: There was instant regret. Everybody knew that what had been done was wrong and that four people had been killed. However, the official and public response was highly unsatisfactory, except for the quick payment of funds for reconstruction. It took about two years to rehabilitate the Embassy.

We quickly organized a downsized Embassy in what had been the AID offices, a quarter of a mile away in a suitable place outside of town. That took up a lot of energy. I had had a guest house across the driveway from my official residence. The official residence was quite modest-not much larger than this house is. I turned the guest house over to a committee of Embassy officers and told them to start a club. So we had a club where people could come. The British and all kinds of friends came. There was a lot of drinking, don, unwinding, and dancing. The new club was a smash hit, and helped us all to get over the disappearance of our spouses, and the trauma of the whole thing.

They asked me what I wanted to call the club, and I said, "Well, I don't know. But off the top of my head, why don't you look at all of the words beginning with 'AMB,' standing for 'Ambassador.'" The only one they could think of was "Ambush." That seemed a little strong, considering what everyone had been through. Anyway, they finally called it "The Ambush Club."

Q: In a way, what happened to you involved the usual, very dull period of readjustment which was almost overtaken by events. There was the continuing, "hostage crisis" in Iran, which affected everyone. Then there was the December, 1979, coup d'etat in Afghanistan...

HUMMEL: Which brought Soviet troops to the border of Pakistan for the first time.

Q: This must have scared the hell out of everyone.

HUMMEL: It did.

Q: Let's talk a little bit about that. What was our reaction and, as you saw it, the Pakistani reaction to the continuing crisis in Iran? We had centered our attention on the hostages, who were held for 444 days. However, there were obviously other things to be concerned about. There was a militant, expansive Shy force in Iran which wanted a worldwide, Islamic revolution on their own terms. How did that sit with you?

HUMMEL: As far as the Pakistani Government was concerned, they desperately wanted to maintain good relations with Iran. They were not going to destroy their relationship with Iran to benefit the Americans, even though it might be reasonable from our point of view to do so. We kept asking them to put pressure on the Iranians to release the hostages, to give them improved treatment, or whatever-all of those things. The Pakistanis may have tried to do something privately, but, quite frankly, they would just waffle in formal communications. Privately, they would tell us that they didn't have any leverage and, because of their relationship with Iran, they were simply not in a position to be stern with the Iranians.

Q: Let's move on to the other, major development. You were blessed or cursed with "interesting times." Is that supposedly the Chinese curse?

HUMMEL: In fact there is no way to say that in Chinese. The ambiguity in the word "interesting" just doesn't come through.

Q: Prior to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, or whatever you want to call it, in December, 1979, how did you see Soviet-Pakistan relations?

HUMMEL: As I said, Bhutto was making a play at countering the United States by appearing to be nice to the Soviets. Zia adopted the traditional, Pakistani view. They didn't want to have hostile relations with the USSR, and never did. However, they viewed the USSR as in league with India. There already was a mutual defense treaty between the Soviet Union and India. Pakistani strategic thinking-and there was good reason for this attitude-was that India and the USSR might combine to try to eliminate Pakistan, thereby giving the Soviets a route to the Indian Ocean, which they always wanted to have. These fears in the Pakistani mind, which were not totally unfounded, prevented them from having any really close relationship with the Soviets. However, the Soviets were present in Pakistan, which didn't want to have bad relations with them, either.

Q: How did the Soviet "coup" of December, 1979, affect Pakistan? Was this a surprise to the Pakistanis?

HUMMEL: As I said, it was preceded by a good many months of leftist rule in Afghanistan after the initial coup d'etat. In fact, there were two coups. There was an internal coup that brought leftists to power. Then, when there was a backlash against that, and the leftists seemed to be in danger of losing power, the Soviets moved in.

Q: Did the Pakistanis give any direct or indirect support to the anti-leftist groups prior to the [Soviet invasion]?

HUMMEL: Yes. The Pakistani "Northwest Frontier Province," or NWFP, adjoins Afghanistan and is populated to a very large extent by Pushtuns, who are identical with the same ethnic group in Afghanistan. That border has always been exceedingly porous.

Q: That includes the Khyber Pass and all that sort of thing.

HUMMEL: All up and down that border there is quite a long stretch of permeable territory. There are traditional passes over and through the mountains. The border includes a plains area down towards Kandahar, in Afghanistan. The Pakistani military had no problem with getting volunteers and arming them to go into Afghanistan and conduct pinprick raids, first against the pro-communist, pro-Russian group that took power in the first coup d'etat. Later on, in a highly systematic way, they assisted us in arming the volunteers with U. S. and Chinese equipment and providing them with Saudi money. There was also Middle Eastern equipment provided to the Afghans.

It was a very highly organized operation which eventually supported the Mujahideen and ultimately forced the Soviets to withdraw from Afghanistan-something that I didn't think would ever happen. I always assumed that the draconian controls within the Soviet Union would prevent any outcry of the sort that we had with regard to our involvement in Vietnam. I thought that negative public opinion within the USSR would not and could not lead the Soviets to withdraw from Afghanistan. In fact, it appeared that this pressure combined with a desire on the part of Gorbachev to do good things caused a reversal.

Q: In December, 1979, the Soviets invaded Afghanistan. Obviously, Pakistan was quite concerned about this-and with reason. What did you think of the Washington response?

HUMMEL: We immediately began to think of various things we might do. I began to make suggestions in telegrams to the Department. I don't recall going back to Washington for consultations, but there were a lot of communications back and forth. We had several visits from Zbigniew Brzezinski, National Security Adviser to the President, Warren Christopher then Deputy Secretary of State, and others, who came to Pakistan.

After consultations with Congress, the Department concocted a meager little American aid package. Congress agreed that our nuclear legislation had to be changed-not to abolish it but to allow some American assistance to Pakistan in the new situation. The legislation was not changed, however, until later on. I had a direct part to play in that, just before I left Pakistan, after Ronald Reagan and the Republicans took over the administration. After President Reagan had assumed office, I drew the attention of Gen. Al Haig, President Reagan's National Security Adviser to this whole failure.

We got together a package to change the existing nuclear legislation. We'll come to that later, because it presents a very interesting foreign affairs problem. By that time the Pakistanis had a very active nuclear program of their own. At the same time we had other interests at play in Pakistan. Incidentally-or, perhaps, not so incidentally-narcotics had become an interest of ours in Pakistan. Anyway, we had conflicting interests involved-an exercise in foreign policy making.

Initially, the package of assistance to Pakistan was so meager that General Zia very impolitely called it "peanuts."

Q: That term actually appeared in the newspapers [at the time].

HUMMEL: I don't think that he quite realized that it would attract so much attention.

Q: For those who may do research on this interview, President Carter had been known as a peanut grower and wholesale dealer in peanuts in Georgia.

HUMMEL: Zia himself was a very interesting person. Bhutto completely miscalculated when he put General Zia in as chief of the Pakistani Army staff. Bhutto thought that Zia was a complete non-entity and would never be a major factor. Of course, that was totally incorrect. Zia turned out to be a very astute politician. He was learning on the job, as all of the military, and all of us, do, to be a political practitioner. He was not dumb by any means, although he was not brilliant in the same way that Bhutto was. However, he managed to hold his fundamentally military government together for I don't know how many years until he died in 1990.

I always enjoyed talking to him. He lived very simply and throughout the time that I was in Pakistan he continued to live in the same house where the chief of the Army staff normally lived. I would go over there for dinner, sometimes with his wife at the table. He had a very pleasant wife and children around the place. One of them was handicapped, it was touching to see how the whole family treated that child. Zia had some pretty astute aides, including General Arif, who handled intelligence and other things. Our CIA operation was in very close contact with them. We were concerned that, after Iran fell [into the hands of religious extremists], there were very few listening posts where we could monitor the telemetry signals of the Soviet space launches.

Q: We had been using our monitoring stations along the Caspian Sea in Iran very successfully. Then, of course, when Iran fell into the hands of the religious extremists, those stations were closed down.

HUMMEL: We had very good cooperation from the Pakistanis. Almost anything that we wanted to do, we could do, as long as we could figure out how we could keep it hidden. That was a problem, of course, but that kind of cooperation was very close, even at this time when we had no military assistance program for Pakistan-until we changed the whole situation.

As I say, I enjoyed Zia. He was personally very mild-mannered with me. Before I left Pakistan, he arranged for me to receive a Pakistani decoration and presented it to me-with a sash. Of course, I obtained permission from the Department to receive it. I was rather surprised that the Department allowed me to take it. However, I obtained approval from the Department, partly because I was instrumental in getting military assistance resumed. This happened early in the Reagan administration.

I liked Zia. He was not, as I say, terribly astute. When I came to him first with a really tough demarche about the Pakistani nuclear program, which had been carefully drafted in Washington, because we had to protect our sources in Pakistan, he was a pretty good actor. He expressed indignation and alarm and swore that none of that could possibly be true. Then he was incautious enough to invite me to send experts anywhere in the country. I said, Yes, that's exactly what we want to do. I'll be back to you in a day or two with a concrete plan. There are some things that we would like to look at. I said that we would bring officers from the United States. You know, he never should have offered that. Of course, he didn't repeat that. He rescinded that offer, and we never got that chance again. Sometimes he didn't think quickly enough.

Q: Did you get a feeling that he understood the American system, including the role of Congress, public opinion, and all of that?

HUMMEL: I think so. We had been lecturing to the Pakistanis for so long on the termination of all aid because of the French nuclear reactor provided in 1978. They understood that quite well, as well as the reason why we did nothing about India's nuclear program while we zapped the Pakistanis. First of all, the Pakistanis have a pretty good idea of how our system works.

Q: How well were you served by your military attaché's?

HUMMEL: By and large, very well. I had to ask for one of the senior defense attaché's to be relieved.

Q: Without naming names, how did that come about? What was the problem?

HUMMEL: He simply wasn't doing his job. He was drinking a little too much, although that was not the problem. The problem was that he was just not competent enough. He let a lot of things pile up which he never answered. I had word from his own subordinates that they would be happy to see him go. As a matter of fact, DIA in Washington made no problem whatever about...

Q: They were kind of waiting for you to make the move?

HUMMEL: I think so.

Q: You took care of their problem.

HUMMEL: We also had a MAAG, a Military Assistance and Advisory Group, of course. Even though the military aid program had stopped, we still had a MAAG staff there. Of course, you couldn't expect the MAAG chief and the Defense Attaché to share an airplane, so they had two airplanes, which I was able to use for my own travel upcountry. It was a marvelous way to go to Quetta and Chitral and the far Himalayas. My wife and I just loved traveling and we did a lot, also by road. We went all over the place. With prior permission these planes were allowed to go to Pakistani military bases.

Q: Did our military attaché's have good contacts within the Pakistani military establishment? I've always thought that we would have particular entree because, in a way, the Pakistanis were brought up in the British and "Anglo" tradition, in somewhat the same way ours were. It would be easier to deal with them than with somebody who came out of a different system.

HUMMEL: That's right. The Pakistani military were quite a professional outfit. They had some very interesting traditions, including the bagpipes, the uniforms, the parades, the officers' mess, the Khyber Pass, and so forth.

Q: A little bit of going back to Rudyard Kipling. You were there in 1980. When did you leave in 1981?

HUMMEL: I left in summertime.

Q: So you left Pakistan approximately a year and a half after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and prior to the election and assumption of power by the Reagan administration. With further reference to the Carter administration, how did you deal with assistance to the rebels in Afghanistan?

HUMMEL: This was handled entirely through the CIA station in the Embassy. The CIA Chief of Station was an excellent person. As I say, we had Pakistani military cooperation. There were elaborate maneuvers to get new listening posts to follow Soviet missile launches and intercept the telemetry. That took a lot of logistical support, with people coming in and going out of the country all the time.

The supply operation for the mujahideen in Afghanistan was run entirely through the Pakistanis. In the initial stages and, I think, for quite a long time afterwards-this happened during all of the time that I was in Pakistan-American officers never met face to face with Afghan mujahideen. In the case of training on new weapons, we trained the Pakistanis, and then the Pakistanis trained the Afghans. This was particularly true of things like the Redeye Missile, a shoulder-launched anti-helicopter missile. It is quite often written that we escalated the war in Afghanistan dramatically when we gave the mujahideen Stinger missiles. In fact, we had supplied them Redeyes for quite some time before that. The Redeye didn't happen to be nearly as efficient as the Stinger, and it often misses its target. However, Soviet helicopters were facing Redeye missiles long before Stinger missiles were introduced. The Stinger, of course, is much more effective. Anyway, this kind of training was done, step by step, without Americans facing Afghans.

The Chinese were making substantial contributions of their own, but later on we were using about half American and half Saudi money to purchase the weapons turned over to the Pakistani military. Subsequently, after my time in Pakistan as Ambassador, a problem developed because the Pakistanis were playing favorites among the mujahideen groups. There was a lot of dissatisfaction in the US government over that. Probably at General Zia's instigation, too much was going to the more militant Islamic leader and not enough to the other people who were not quite so fundamentalist in their views. Some of them were doing better and more effective fighting than...

Q: I would think that Zia, being a professional military man, would be a bit dubious over strengthening the fundamentalists.

HUMMEL: Well, I think that we all realized-and the Pakistani better than anybody else-that the Afghans just don't work together very well. We're seeing that, of course, right now.

Q: They're still...

HUMMEL: Even since the Soviets have left.

Q: It's already 10 years, and they're still fighting.

HUMMEL: Zia was anxious to keep the goodwill of the clerics in Pakistan, on whom he depended for support. So, as far as he was concerned and because he was a pretty sharp observer, the long term problems of fomenting this armed activity in Afghanistan revolved around...

Q: As the Ambassador to Pakistan, how did you find your CIA operation? Did they keep you well informed? Sometimes this relationship is not very good, and at other times it is.

HUMMEL: It was excellent. One of the Pakistanis who had been recruited by CIA and was giving us very good information about the Pakistani nuclear program was caught by the Pakistani Government. He was a dumb guy. He was supposed to destroy all of his old papers, but he kept everything. So for some reason-we never knew how-he was arrested and disappeared. The CIA Chief of Station came to me immediately and told me what had happened. We immediately got his case officer out of Pakistan. This operation was not handled out of Islamabad but from another place in Pakistan. I immediately sent a telegram, outlining my scenario for handling this when and if it was brought to me by the Pakistani Government.

This is one of the things that I was proud of. I didn't just send in a report on this, asking for instructions, but I drafted a solution. I received approval for the solution, which was that I could use my suggested form of words, which I immediately committed to memory. Sure enough, it took about a week after that before I was called in by my good friend, Shahnawaz, the Secretary of the Foreign Ministry who was the number three man in rank in the ministry. Above him were the minister and the senior civil servant in the ministry. He made his point, and I said what I was prepared to say, which was that I wanted his government to know that I am in charge of all American activities in Pakistan, as an Ambassador should be. I said that I take this responsibility seriously. I knew and know about these activities. I didn't admit anything. Regarding this incident in that particular city, "You must realize that you have failed to give us information that we feel that we need about your nuclear program. It cannot be a surprise to you that we were trying to obtain this information. I don't think that I want to say anything more." Shahnawaz just smiled and nodded. I never heard anything more about it.

Q: I saw something in the press that the CIA Chief of Station was "uncovered" or something like that. Did that happen when you were in Pakistan?

HUMMEL: The Chief of Station is usually declared publicly, or at least privately to the local government. So that wasn't too bad. It is rare to have a Chief of Station who is under cover as far as the local government is concerned.

Q: Before we move to the end of this section, dealing with the arms prohibition and your role in that connection, may we return to the earlier matter of Prime Minister Mohammed Ali Bhutto? Mrs. Benazir Bhutto, [his daughter], is now Prime Minister again. She was previously arrested. Did we get involved in this matter at all?

HUMMEL: No. I met Benazir Bhutto a couple of times at receptions. I never attempted to have any substantive contact with her. It would have been taken quite amiss by General Zia. At the time I was Ambassador in Pakistan she was by no means the heir to control of the PPP, Pakistan People's Party, either before or after her father died. She messed up, as, I'm afraid, she is doing again. Even in those early days, before there was a political context for her to come from, before the elections when she was elected the first time, she acted, I thought, in a foolish way. She alienated many of her father's closest associates by bringing in her young Fabian Socialist friends from England, elbowing aside the oldsters who had been Bhutto's main support in the PPP and the organizers of the party. She lost a lot of political strength by the way she handled the internal affairs of her party.

I did not have the feeling that she was going to rise to power. If I had had a map of the political future, we would have made more of an effort to be in touch with her. She was angry with the United States because she blamed us, in part, for not preventing the execution of her father. She said this in a book, not too long ago. She apparently felt that we should have made more of an effort. She maintained that her father was innocent. So perhaps you can say that she lost some ground there because, as I said, most people believe-and some of them knew-that Bhutto was guilty as charged.

Q: Junior officers in an Embassy can often go out and make contacts which senior officers cannot do. This is one reason why, in this Oral History Program, it is interesting for those whom we interview to talk about their earlier years in the Foreign Service, because they had a different experience as junior officers than they had as senior officers. There is a structural reason for this. Were you able to use the junior officers to get out and about different places?

HUMMEL: We had some junior officers who were very fluent in Urdu. The language training program was continuing. They were put in the appropriate places-usually in the Political Section. We had two outstanding people. One of them eventually rose to be Ambassador in Pakistan and was killed in the same plane with General Zia. That was Arnold Raphel. Another junior officer has now gone off to be Ambassador to Turkey. I draw a blank on his name.

Q: He was the head of the Executive Secretariat in the Department.

HUMMEL: It was Mark Grossman.

Q: Did these officers have contact with the opposition?

HUMMEL: Yes, indeed. A third officer, Herb Hagerty, also had very good contacts with officials of the PPP-not directly with Benazir Bhutto in particular, but with other officials of the party. I think that we were reporting quite accurately on what was happening inside that opposition party.

Q: You mentioned that Brzezinski and Warren Christopher came out to Pakistan. Did you have the feeling that you were or weren't getting much support for the way in which things should be going between the United States and Pakistan? Were you getting much support from the powers that be in the State Department?

HUMMEL: There was a great deal of interest, but there was more talk than action. As I said, the aid package that we put together as an inducement for the promise of a cessation of their nuclear program never worked out. It continued to chug along for a few years. The package really was terribly small. As I said, General Zia called it "peanuts." I thought that it was insufficient to attract their interest. Also, I knew, after being told so by Pakistanis, that any Pakistani leader who actually terminated their nuclear program would be thrown out of office by the Pakistanis themselves. They could not, actually, terminate the program. So our only option was to try to string the issue out over a longer period of time. I think that we did that.

Q: Was this a deliberate feeling on your part? Or did you feel, "Well, it's a nice policy and nice to stand by. However, with India already having nuclear facilities, the Pakistanis just have to have this program. It's a 'no win' thing to be completely idealistic on this."

HUMMEL: Since this whole aid package would have required Congressional approval, this was one main reason why I recall not voicing a reservation about the actual termination of the aid program, except in the course of a few conversations with people like Brzezinski. I really surmised that it was unlikely that the Pakistanis would actually terminate their nuclear program. Of course, if this had happened, it would have been the answer for us. If I had been on record and the Intelligence Committee of Congress had received a copy of my telegram, they would have said, "Why should we change this legislation when the nuclear program isn't going to go ahead anyway?"

Q: So you always had to be aware of what the impact would be in Washington of what you said in your telegrams?

HUMMEL: Exactly. Not so incidentally, this is a major defect in the way we conduct business. So many foreign leaders now will not tell us what they think because they know that there may be a leak in Washington—a leak coming straight out of Congress. This has happened so often. We can't get the Chinese Communists to tell us frankly what they know about the North Koreans, for example.

Q: The Reagan administration came into office on January 20, 1981. You were reaching the end of a normal tour of duty as Ambassador to Pakistan. Were you planning to leave Pakistan about that time, anyway?

HUMMEL: Yes.

Q: How did you deal with the new, Reagan, administration and how did you find it, in terms of the situation in Pakistan?

HUMMEL: Well, of course, Al Haig came in as Secretary of State on January 20. I'm sure that he saw my telegram on January 21. It was like opening the door for a serious discussion of what we ought to do. The main point was that we and the Carter administration had failed to do anything significant about the Russian occupation of Afghanistan and the immediate threat which that posed to Pakistan and to our interests in the region. We terminated our wheat exports to Russia and backed out of participating in the Olympic Games in Moscow. This amounted to shooting ourselves in the foot in both cases. It was pretty tragic. It wasn't for any lack of trying on the part of the Carter administration. However, as I say, they just couldn't put together an aid package substantial enough to protect what we wanted. What we wanted was to have the Pakistanis sign up for limitations on their nuclear program.

Meanwhile, it is true that we were providing more and more substantial support through Pakistan to the Afghan mujahideen, who were fighting the Soviets-eventually, very successfully.

Anyway, Secretary of State Al Haig immediately fired back a telegram to us. We had a couple of more exchanges of telegrams, and then he asked me to come back to Washington for consultations. This was in late January, 1981.

Q: So we were moving very rapidly on this...

HUMMEL: Very rapidly. It was high on the agenda. After all, President Reagan was a hawk, and so was Al Haig. So I had a willing audience. I came back to Washington and spent about six weeks here. This was a solid six weeks of work. First off, I did a lot of Congressional liaison, getting Senator John Glenn...

Q: Of Ohio.

HUMMEL: He was the author of most of the nuclear legislation that would have to be changed. I am very annoyed with John Glenn now because he has written articles strenuously objecting to the policy of assisting Pakistan, since Pakistan has kept on with its nuclear program. He is totally disingenuous because he was on board and he understood and agreed with our changes in the law in early 1981. He pretends now that he did not, and that is bad.

Anyway, this was a multi-pronged effort, because I was sort of on the periphery. There were many more people working on it than myself. We had to get together an agreed aid program, with various components in it. We did this with help from the Pentagon and AID. We delivered to the meetings what we wanted to do. Then it was a matter of selling it to the Congress. I was only one of many people involved including the top level of the State Department, who did very good work in presenting this dilemma, first to the White House, and then to Congress. Secretary of State Al Haig was behind this effort all the way.

I went back to Pakistan and was able to assure the Pakistani Government that we were going to resume assistance shortly. We had to give them some idea of what the aid program would consist of. This shortly did happen.

Q: For somebody who is looking at this issue in the way a professional diplomat operates. You were not in your job as American Ambassador to Pakistan because you were a Republican or a Democrat. The presidential election had been held in November, 1980. President Carter lost, Reagan won. Reagan would not become President until January, 1981. Did you sit down and make the calculation, "All right, we have a more 'hawkish' type administration. Now is the time to do this." In other words, you held off your telegram until the water was the right temperature to pop it in.

HUMMEL: That's right. Besides, I had a personal relationship with Al Haig, so I could address him personally and be sure that he would see the telegram.

Q: How did this relationship develop?

HUMMEL: He was on the High Commissioner's staff when I was handling the negotiation on the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Also, he was around in the White House-I can't recall the exact time-when I was Assistant Secretary and Acting Assistant Secretary of State in the EA Bureau. I didn't know him well, but he knew me, and I could get his attention.

Q: So how did you feel about the direction of Pakistan and Afghanistan when you left Pakistan in the summer of 1981?

HUMMEL: I was glad that we had unfrozen our relationship with Pakistan. I seriously doubted-in fact, I was pretty sure-that they would not terminate their nuclear program. We had been following this matter for a very long time-both the CIA apparatus in Europe and elsewhere. They were importing materials and indeed the design, which was stolen from the Dutch by a well-known Pakistani nuclear physicist. They were putting together a "cascade" of very high speed centrifuges into which you put very rarefied, low pressure uranium in gaseous form. You ran it down this cascade long enough-for months and years, and you eventually got very highly enriched uranium, with the enriched part separated out. That takes an awful lot of expert engineering and a lot of special materials, which are not easily available. We had monitored their acquisition of these materials from around the world and did quite a bit to stop their obtaining some of them. Yet they were chugging ahead at a site that we knew about-which they flatly denied that they were doing. They had no choice but to deny it. We had no choice but to disbelieve them.

Q: Did you consider that Zia was firmly in place, or was there any particular way that...

HUMMEL: Yes. We concluded that he was firmly in place. Most Pakistanis agreed that there comes a time when a military government in Pakistan has to step down, because the military get so entangled in government affairs, as they did under Zia, and therefore in corruption, and are blamed by the public. Their reputation deteriorates in the country. Eventually, the military say, "To hell with it", and they allow a civilian government to come to power. That's what happened in the case previously of Ayub Khan and eventually happened under Zia. Even under Zia there were elections to Parliament of a sort. He took several steps back from the political process, although he was the final arbiter and most of the time made the decisions. So this was the way I felt then and I feel now. The time would come, some day, when the Pakistani military would say, "We're not going to play this game any more."

Q: Why don't we stop at this point? You were leaving Pakistan in the summer of 1981. We'll pick up from there next time.

HUMMEL: I would like to mention one issue of morale in the Embassy in Islamabad. In some respects a tour of duty in Pakistan was tough on women. I didn't really realize it until my wife, Betty Lou, brought it to my attention. Women were uncomfortable because there were no women on the streets or visible in ordinary life. Pakistan is a Muslim country. It's not nearly as Muslim as Saudi Arabia, but very few women were functioning outside of their homes, except in the bazaar areas, where they had to go to do their shopping.

Q: I know. We lived in Saudi Arabia for two years. My wife found it quite difficult.

HUMMEL: Yes. Also, the attitude of the Pakistani men was somewhat threatening to many American women. We had one case of attempted rape, for instance. One of our male, household servants attempted to rape the daughter of our medical doctor, as a matter of fact. It wasn't too traumatic, because the daughter was a registered nurse, didn't lose her head, and nothing actually happened, you might say. She never should have allowed the man to stand in the doorway while she was in bed. That was just dumb on her part. However, of course, you can't blame her. The man was instantly fired. We tried to take some legal action taken against him, but I could never get the Pakistani authorities to do that.

Reports of incidents like this got around. There were cases of pinching and men putting their hands on women in public and so on...

Q: And plain cases of just staring [at American women]. This was a problem in Saudi Arabia.

HUMMEL: This was one aspect of life in Pakistan. It turned out that women who had problems with their husbands were the most militant in demanding changes in things. Six women formed a little cabal in Islamabad and eventually insisted on seeing me, because they insisted that, when they went to the very nice swimming pool located within the Embassy compound, before it was burned down, they had to park their cars in places where there was no shade. Cars could get terribly hot when left out in the sun. There were shaded spaces where the Pakistani employees of the Embassy were parking their cars. These women demanded that we kick the Pakistani employees out of their shaded parking spaces, so that the Embassy wives could park in shaded areas. The very idea of working themselves up into a real fury, to the point of coming to the Ambassador with this matter, shows you how demented some people would get. I flatly refused. I said that these Pakistanis were members of the American civil service and were U. S. Government employees. I was not going to have to tell them that they have to park elsewhere so that your part-time parking would be more comfortable for you. I said that I just couldn't and wouldn't do that. They went away, very unhappy and disgruntled.

This incident was coincidental with the time when the State Department promoted or authorized the formation of Community Liaison Offices. My very good DCM, Peter Constable, had this brilliant idea of making the ringleader of this little group the Community Liaison Officer. From that time on, we didn't have a morale problem. She became involved in both sides of the problem, so to speak. She could explain the Embassy point of view to the other wives in a way that we couldn't do.

Q: In a way this is a case of "co-option," but at the same time it's a practical solution.

HUMMEL: I think that most of us in the Foreign Service were opposed to the idea of having to appoint a Community Liaison Officer, because we felt that we could handle things alone. It turned out that the new system worked out very well.

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Q: Today is St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 1995. Erin Go Bragh [Ireland Forever], I suppose, is the right term to use. We have you leaving Pakistan in 1981. As you left Pakistan, how did you evaluate U. S. relations with that country? Where were Pakistan and the United States going?

HUMMEL: I was quite happy and satisfied with my tour in Pakistan, which I enjoyed personally in many ways, as I've said. Professionally, I was able to help materially in getting the aid program restarted, particularly with Pakistan clearly facing up to the Soviet threat, after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The Carter administration's inability to do anything significant about that had bothered me, as I said before.

By the time I left Pakistan, we had an aid program in place, under new legislation which permitted it, although I didn't think that the Pakistani nuclear program was going to stop. I felt that we may have slowed it down a bit. Relations between Pakistan and the United States were back on a reasonable basis. We had leverage through the assistance programs. We were also actively supporting the mujahideen in Afghanistan, through Pakistan. Eventually, they managed to force the Soviets out of Afghanistan or persuaded the Soviets to leave. I had some considerable satisfaction as I left there, after four full years.

Q: You were the American Ambassador to Pakistan. In our national elections of 1980, Ronald Reagan was elected President. He was considered [by some people] a Right wing "tool" [of American vested interests]. I'm not talking about the politics of all of this, but as you looked at Ronald Reagan, from the point of view of an Ambassador, and having dealt with various issues, what was your impression of the campaign and the arrival of Ronald Reagan [in the White House]?

HUMMEL: I saw it mostly from the China perspective. I could see that it could conceivably be a total disaster because one of Reagan's promises during the campaign was to upgrade our relations with Taiwan, making them either official or quasi official. This was a move which could have destroyed our relations with the PRC, which had been carefully nurtured for quite some time. In 1979 we had already switched our recognition away from Taiwan to Beijing. I was pretty sure that would be destroyed if Reagan's rhetoric was carried out.

Because the statements made by Reagan during the campaign upset the PRC a great deal, the Reagan people sent George Bush on a quick trip to Beijing to try to explain. He, of course, had been the head of the U. S. Liaison Office in Beijing for one year, 1974-75. The Chinese Communist leaders knew him very well. They liked him. However, he failed to mollify or calm the fears of the Chinese Communists as to what the Reagan administration might be up to.

In the spring of 1981, after the Reagan administration had already taken over the White House, I came back to Washington, where I spent some time still working on Pakistan. I think that this was because I had gotten to know Secretary of State Al Haig better. Haig decided that he wanted to push me to be Ambassador to Beijing. That possibility was quietly cooking along behind the scenes.

Q: Do you think that part of Haig's calculation was that this was a rather "odd" administration coming into office and that it would be wise to get a professional diplomat in China as Ambassador, rather than someone else?

HUMMEL: Yes, you are right, although I think that I would put it somewhat differently. What Haig wanted in Beijing was somebody who would vigorously, and at probable risk to his career, oppose, in official communications, any stupid things that might be done by the White House. It was not only President Reagan who wanted to be nice to old Taiwan friends, whom we had treated rather shabbily. It was also Richard Allen, who was then the National Security Adviser, who was also very vociferous about this issue.

Q: What was Allen's "Chinese" interest and background?

HUMMEL: I honestly don't know.

Q: I can't remember, either. He sort of appeared and disappeared rather quickly.

HUMMEL: Fortunately, he disappeared. Someone found some money, in cash, in his office drawer which shouldn't have been there. He also accepted gifts from Taiwan.

Even before that, at the time of Reagan's inauguration, Anna Chennault, the widow of Gen. Clair Chennault, was mixing her sticky fingers into all kinds of things...

Q: She was of Chinese extraction. She was born in China.

HUMMEL: Yes. She was a member of the Republican National Committee. She was very actively involved in planning for the inauguration. Without consulting anybody, as far as I could find out, she decided to invite representatives from Taiwan to come to the official inauguration. Well, senior PRC officials, of course, found out about this and said that they were not going to come if these Taiwan high officials were going to be there. A lot of back tracking had to be done. The result was that the Taiwan representatives didn't come to the Reagan inauguration. Anna's stock, of course, dropped sharply, both in Beijing and in many circles in Washington.

Secretary of State Al Haig clearly understood the problem of China which had been created by Reagan's own personal proclivities and also by his NSC adviser, Richard Allen. Among other things, Haig made his own trip in June, 1981, to the PRC to mollify the Chinese-or to promise them that he would do his best to keep the relationship on a reasonable track. Incidentally, or perhaps not so incidentally, he exceeded his instructions by saying publicly that we would now begin to sell selective, defensive armaments to the PRC. This matter had been discussed and studied, but he did not have the authority to make that statement. However, he made it anyway. Al is pretty much of an unguided missile, as you may know. On China he was very good, but in other ways he is kind of flaky. I must say that I owe him, because he is the man who pushed me to be Ambassador to the PRC.

Q: What happened? Did you "come back" for consultations or had you left Pakistan?

HUMMEL: I spent two months in Washington after I left Pakistan.

Q: You left Pakistan essentially without an ongoing assignment.

HUMMEL: Yes, I guess so. I had not been formally nominated to be Ambassador to Beijing, but this was pretty much on the track.

Q: Did Haig call you in and chat with you?

HUMMEL: He talked to me on the phone, in Washington and in Beijing, asking me if I wanted to be Ambassador to China. I said, "Hell, yes!" But there was kind of a progression here. Haig persuaded President Reagan to make some mollifying statements himself during the spring of 1981, saying that our relationship with the PRC was governed by two communiques-the "Shanghai Communique" and the communique related to the switch of recognition from Nationalist China to the PRC. The main thrust of this was that there was only one China and we would not promote two Chinas-one in Taiwan and one in Beijing. Reagan publicly reaffirmed those principles. That helped a great deal. Al Haig made his own trip to Beijing in June, 1981.

However, in July and August, 1981, just as I was preparing to go out to Beijing-I finally went out in September, 1981-there were press stories emanating from the White House-which were all true-that Richard Allen had developed the idea that we would sell some military equipment to Beijing, just enough to keep them satisfied. Then we would radically increase our sales of military equipment to Taiwan. The PRC leaders, of course, read all of this. They had planned to send their Vice Chief of Staff, an Admiral named Liu Huaqing, on an exploratory trip to the United States, to arrive in August, 1981, with a considerable list of things that we might be able to sell to the PRC and which we would discuss. We had an advance copy of this list.

When the stories appeared in the press about this plan to entangle the PRC with a few purchases of military equipment, leaving us free to sell a great deal to Taiwan, the PRC decided that it had to react. First of all, they canceled Admiral Liu's visit. That was quite a shock to those of us who were working on China. I was spending time on the Mainland China desk by that time, preparing to go to Beijing.

The next move was much more serious. The PRC Prime Minister and President Reagan had met in Cancun at the time of a meeting of the Group of Seven Industrialized Countries there. During the half hour or 45 minute meeting that they had, the Prime Minister didn't have time to say what he wanted to say, in a multilateral setting. So he sent the Foreign Minister, Huang Hua, on a separate visit to Washington. He, in effect, presented a very tough ultimatum. He said that, unless the United States agreed to set a date for ending all arms sales to Taiwan, there would have to be a downgrading of diplomatic relations between the PRC and the United States. The PRC wanted to see an end to what they saw as encouraging Taiwan's independence.

In a way, that was true. Congress had tried to define our obligations in the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979. When the Carter administration switched recognition from Taipei to Beijing, the announcement came at the end of 1978 and took effect in 1979. Deng Xiaoping made his visit to the United States, where he was photographed with that silly, Texas hat. Shortly after that, the China Lobby people, the pro-Taiwan people in Congress, got together and sought to make sure that we would not abandon Taiwan or connive at a turnover by force of the people in Taiwan who did not want to live under communist rule. So they arranged to pass the Taiwan Relations Act. This was a complex bill, but the main portion which is relevant here provides that the United States will continue to sell to Taiwan those arms which we consider necessary for the self-protection of Taiwan against aggression-meaning, from Communist China.

This, of course, infuriated the PRC, but this had all been in the past, before the Reagan administration entered office. The Reagan administration was reviving this legislation, not only as an excuse, but treating it as a mandatory obligation in law passed by Congress, as opposed to communiques, which are only documents approved by the Executive Branch. The Reagan administration was using the Taiwan Relations Act as a reason for acceding to the very sharp demands of the people in Taiwan, who, at that time, were still quite concerned over military readiness and the eventual possibility, down the road, of a PRC invasion of Taiwan. All of this led to the PRC reaction which culminated in this ultimatum. We were told that we had to set a date for termination of arms sales to Taiwan.

At the time John Holdridge was Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs. I had come back to Washington to attend a crucial meeting on the PRC ultimatum. Of course, downgrading diplomatic relations would mean that I would lose my job as Ambassador to the PRC, so this matter had my full attention. [Laughter] One of the first things we did was to have a military study made, which concluded that a proposed sale of F-5E fighter aircraft to Taiwan was not necessary at this time, because it was not necessary for Taiwan's own protection. That covered one flank-the mandatory, legislative aspect of the issue to let Taiwan have whatever it needed.

Then we started a long, 10-month process of negotiations, which I carried on in Beijing. It was done in very desultory fashion at first. Nobody quite knew how to approach this issue. I must say that I had very good, almost fortuitous support from Democrats. Walter Mondale came through Beijing. Harold Brown came through...

Q: He was a former Secretary of Defense [in the Carter administration].

HUMMEL: I urged them-and they readily agreed-to tell the PRC leaders that no American President, Republican or Democrat, could set a date for terminating arms sales to Taiwan under the existing circumstances. That was a big help, because this, in effect, was the key...

Q: It sounds as if the PRC leaders had bad political advice or at least they didn't understand the American system. An ultimatum like that won't work.

HUMMEL: Well, looking back, I think that it was a combination of the two. I believe that the PRC leaders at the very top level did not understand the political nuances that made it impossible for any American President to do what they were demanding. However, I think-I know-that the people further below in the PRC Government had a more sophisticated agenda. Their agenda was simply to get the full attention of President Ronald Reagan, which they succeeded in doing.

Behind the scenes Secretary of State Al Haig-and he doesn't brag enough about this, in the book he wrote...

Q: His book on his time as Secretary of State. I forget the name, but we can put it in later.

HUMMEL: In any case there were four things to keep in mind. Richard Allen had left the White House. He was more or less fired. Al Haig had a freer run of things. He insisted on seeing President Ronald Reagan privately, and often. Over a considerable period of time, Al was able to persuade President Reagan that we had to work our way out of this impasse and that we could not, at that time, sell unlimited military equipment to Taiwan. In effect, we decided on a unilateral moratorium on all arms sales to Taiwan while negotiations were going on. This was a very difficult thing for President Reagan to agree to do, but it is greatly to Al Haig's credit that he was able to persuade Reagan on this issue. The means of persuasion he used, I happen to have learned from Al Haig, were somewhat strange, I may say. They had nothing to do with foreign policy. His clinching argument with Reagan was, "We Republicans cannot have, in our first year in office, a foreign policy disaster like a rupture with the PRC. This would hurt us, domestically." It was the domestic aspect, then, which caught Reagan's attention, which was rather ironic, instead of the strategic and foreign policy damage.

Q: Obviously, this is one of those things which often happen under our form of government. This was a battle for the President's "soul." Were there forces within the Republican-dominated Senate-or elsewhere, besides Allen-who were basically trying to "hurt" our relations with Communist China?

HUMMEL: Oh, yes. Jesse Helms, of course.

Q: The [Republican] Senator from North Carolina.

HUMMEL: And people around the edges, who had been involved with China for a long time in the China Lobby. I refer to Ray Cline, a former CIA official who was actually on the Taiwanese payroll, and Walter Judd, a former Congressman who had been a medical missionary in China and was very active in the China Lobby. There were a lot of people who were strongly urging-and who were being strongly urged by the Taiwan people, who were very deeply entrenched in and around Washington-to do something for Taiwan.

Q: And, of course, Ronald Reagan, who had a rather simplistic view of foreign affairs, grew up in the California "Hurrah for Chiang Kai-shek" milieu.

HUMMEL: That's right. Regarding the PRC, it is rather interesting to note that many Americans, at the time of the visit to the PRC by President Nixon, had really closed their eyes to the fact that the Cultural Revolution was still going on in the background in Mainland China. This was lost on most Americans. I don't quite know how this happened. American press people, even people in the administration, participated in this euphoria over the 1972 Nixon visit. There was a wave of opening Chinese restaurants, learning to use chopsticks, and saying that China was a great place and so on. I was not along on the Nixon visit. I was tied up in the negotiations on the status of Micronesia. This euphoria was very far from reality. Mao Zedong was failing in health but still making silly decisions.

In any case the people in Taiwan were doing their best to emphasize all of this. At that time the Taiwan people saw this as a zero sum game and did a lot of things around the edges to try to spoil the relationship between Washington and Beijing. Demonstrations in favor of the Kuo Min Tang party Chinese Nationalist political party were held at a time when PRC Government officials were visiting here. There were damaging newspaper stories. There were all kinds of little things-and some not so little-to promote and support the cause of Taiwan, because advocates of Taiwan could see that support for Taiwan was eroding, as Americans became more and more involved in trade and negotiations of all kinds with the PRC.

As I say, the negotiations in Beijing went on for 10 months. The PRC ultimatum came to us at the end of September, 1981, and was reiterated at a meeting in October. In effect, our negotiations began in Beijing in February, 1982, just after John Holdridge was able to come to Beijing as the Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs. He said that we were not going to sell F-5E's to Taiwan because, under the Taiwan Relations Act, we didn't believe that they were necessary for the defense of Taiwan at this point. That helped some. The negotiations continued, with growing intensity, through the summer of 1982 and finally culminated on August 17, 1982, with a communique.

The necessary shape of the communique had been pretty visible to everybody for a good many months. The PRC leaders just couldn't bring themselves to agree to it until the very last minute. There was a deadline. The PRC leaders like to stretch things out to the deadline.

Q: Describe the deadline.

HUMMEL: The deadline is when we had to make decisions about selling more arms and spare parts to Taiwan. The shape of the communique was determined by the fact that we had to persuade the PRC leaders to link a continued diminution of our arms sales to Taiwan, in both quantity and quality, although we had a little escape valve there in terms of quality because I made sure that we said that we could not always match the quality of seven year old weapons, because we no longer would manufacture them. Anyway, it was a matter of quantity and quality diminishing, but tied to a peaceful situation in the Taiwan Straits. The effect of this, of course, was that if there was no peaceful situation, if the PRC decided to try to invade Taiwan, which we thought was very unlikely, then all bets were off. We could then, sell or give anything we pleased to Taiwan.

Q: In a way, this was a "face-saving" device, because if the Taiwan Straits were threatened, which is essentially the only reason that we would be selling arms to Taiwan, then we could [do so].

HUMMEL: Also, we brought this communique into conformity with the Taiwan Relations Act, which required us to sell things which are necessary for the defense of Taiwan. So the more necessary the defense, the more we could sell.

As I said, the negotiations were quite excruciating for several months. George Bush came over to the PRC.

Q: He was Vice President by that time.

HUMMEL: He carried letters from Ronald Reagan which were later made public, reaffirming our fundamental policy of one China and also reaffirming that we would continue to have what we called unofficial relations with Taiwan. These letters helped the process along.

As I said, the final deadline was genuine, although we had to persuade the PRC leaders of this. The deadline involved a decision to close down the F-5E production line in the United States.

Q: Which was our principal export fighter aircraft to Third World countries. It was more a defensive aircraft than an attack aircraft.

HUMMEL: A defensive aircraft. There were also other items of military equipment which we owed to the PRC, and many to Taiwan, which had already been paid for. We had just been holding back on the deliveries. There were several deadlines which we simply could not postpone any further. We persuaded the PRC leaders that, if we did not have an agreement on their ultimatum, the terms of which were public knowledge, we would then have to go ahead and make these sales to Taiwan, and the whole world would believe that we were just spitting in the eye of the PRC and ignoring their ultimatum. We pointed out that that would not be good for the PRC and not good for the United States, either. So we finally reached an agreement which had these characteristics.

Q: You say that these were "excruciating" negotiations. Could you talk a bit about your experience at that time with the Chinese style of negotiation?

HUMMEL: Well, I'd read a good deal about it, and, frankly, I'd had some experience of negotiating with the Chinese. When I was working for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration [UNRRA] just after World War II had ended, I stayed on in China for a year and traveled to Communist controlled areas. I got to know the Chinese Communists pretty well. Frankly, I don't think that there's anything particularly unique about the Chinese negotiating style. Any clever negotiator-and many American lawyers-knows all of these tricks as well. One of them is to shame the other side, pulling out some ancient statement that you made two months before and pretending high indignation because you were now saying something else. Another one is trying to get matters of principle established before the negotiations start and, buried in these principles, of course, are the elements that they want to insist on. There have been books written about Chinese negotiating style. There is a long list of their tactics, but none of them are unique to China.

Q: I must say that this whole "deadline" ploy reminds me of trade union negotiations. Did you have to go into any all night sessions at the very end to show everybody that you had gone to the point of exhaustion? Sometimes that is done for TV purposes.

HUMMEL: No. I must say that we had extremely good backup from Washington. The people who were actually drafting our instructions included the China Country Desk Officer, named Bill Rope-William Rope-and a lawyer from the Legal Adviser's Office in the State Department, named Liz Verville. They, of course, would have to check every move with the White House. Sometimes we could get immediate turnaround, rapid response to requests sent to the Department. At the end of the day in Beijing we would send a telegram. By the opening of business on the following morning we could get a reply.

Q: Sometimes you get into one of these negotiating situations where everything has to be referred to someone else. The people you are negotiating with are nothing more than a "letter box." Did you find this to be the case?

HUMMEL: Well, yes. However, very frankly, this was true on both sides. I was a letter box, too. Now, I could-and did-make many, strong suggestions back to Washington and obtained approval of those suggestions. However, I couldn't break new ground with the Chinese without obtaining permission from Washington. This makes one long for the sailing ship days when there was no radio and no undersea cable. Ambassadors were sent out with six months' worth of "Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary" powers to commit the United States Government.

Q: Still on this issue of the battle for the "soul" of President Reagan on China, George Bush was Vice President but had actually been Reagan's opponent for the Republican nomination for president. Bush had also been our representative in Beijing. Did you feel that he was playing much of a role, or was he not yet "comfortable" with Ronald Reagan?

HUMMEL: He was very much out of it. I am quite sure that George Bush, whom I got to know quite well, simply didn't want to have to argue with Ronald Reagan about China policy. He saw that Secretary of State Al Haig was doing the heavy lifting on this and that he was doing the right thing. Why should George Bush strain his own, personal relations with Reagan when he didn't have to? I think that was probably wise.

Q: I think so, too. Did you have any problems getting "confirmed" [by the Senate]? China is one of those places which arouses a lot of emotion.

HUMMEL: I think that I was well enough known as a professional Foreign Service Officer. I'd already had four nominations and confirmations through the Senate-three times as Ambassador and once as Assistant Secretary of State. In their files they knew about me. I think that they considered me a good Foreign Service Officer who would do what one ought to do. I did get a special questionnaire from Sen. Jesse Helms, in those days he never showed up at hearings where Ambassadors were being considered for confirmation. He generally still doesn't show up very much in person at hearings. However, he made no real problems. He sent me a long questionnaire-20 questions-about my attitudes and what we were going to do with China. I just turned this over to the country desk, and they supplied the answers. I signed them, and we sent them back to Senator Helms. But I had no problem.

I was not the first choice to be Ambassador to the PRC. There was a retired State Governor, whom I never really knew. I just knew that there was a retired State Governor, but didn't know which one, who'd been offered the job of Ambassador to the PRC by the White House. However, I understood that he turned it down because his wife didn't want to live in Beijing. It's not a terribly pleasant place to live, as a matter of fact. Anyway, I wasn't the first choice.

Q: You arrived in Beijing in September, 1981. Could you describe how it was to live there during that period? You were there from 1981 to 1985. How were living conditions, how was the Embassy and its staff, and how did they function?

HUMMEL: I must say that we had a considerably substandard Embassy in terms of housing when I arrived. It was mostly in one compound. We had some administrative support and staff in a second and rather miserable compound. The office and the residence were squeezed together in this small compound, as well as the USIS office, too. Compared with other Embassy Residences, our Residence was substandard.

The reason for this is that when we first came there to establish the U. S. Liaison Office, it was below the status of an Embassy. Then, when we switched recognition to Beijing, the large estate which was the residence for the Chinese Nationalist Ambassador here in Washington was swiftly snatched away and sold off to a friendly Chinese from Chinatown in Washington, D. C.. So we could not turnover that residence to the PRC, which was very unhappy about it. So, because the PRC did not get preferential treatment in Washington, we couldn't get preferential treatment in Beijing. It took a lot of very hard work and wrangling with the PRC authorities to get better premises.

Finally, we wound up with three large compounds, including the one with the Residence-still a substandard residence-and USIS office, with another place for the Chancery and other offices. In the beginning, Beijing was really a tough post. Because of the work load which immediately sprang up, we had an average of, say, 20 to 30 new staff members living in hotel rooms with their families at any given time. Those hotels were not very good. It was a very difficult life for many people. We would assign them to housing as soon as we could get it. The PRC authorities dragged their feet. I think that they were trying to get us to do more things for them in Washington. We were holding their feet to the fire as best we could, not allowing PRC officials assigned here in Washington to go out and rent residences outside of this large apartment building which they had purchased for themselves. They had a separate residence for the Chinese Ambassador.

For quite some time-I've forgotten what year it was when we finally got legal leverage to prevent foreign embassies from buying or renting anything, anywhere. This was contained in a provision of the Foreign Missions Control Act, or some such title.

Q: The idea was to develop reciprocity.

HUMMEL: Exactly. We had done some of this already by dragging our feet on permits, and so on. But later on we had a legal basis for it, and we exercised it very sharply, with the result that we got more and more apartments available to us in Beijing, with kitchens. So fewer and fewer of our people-quite often with children-had to stay in miserable hotel room accommodations, where they weren't allowed to cook in the room. They would have to go downstairs to dining rooms for their meals-sometimes for six months at a time. So morale was a problem, but that's another question.

Q: Why don't we talk about it now?

HUMMEL: All right. We had a very high percentage of Chinese language speakers-people who had been taught Chinese, mostly by the Foreign Service Institute. Nearly all of the substantive officers spoke Chinese. That meant a kind of emotional or intellectual commitment to China. Many of the wives had studied Chinese with their husbands, if they didn't have children to occupy their attention. So they were people who could move around the city on their own and appreciate things. Beijing is a fabulous place, from the cultural point of view. Also, you could travel to designated areas, with permission. So it wasn't like a prison. Yet, particularly in the early days, in 1981 when I first went there, it was not a very pleasant place, especially for the staff who did not speak Chinese and who viewed this assignment as a kind of exile for two years. They regarded it as something they would endure, get over with, and leave.

Now among the clerks and other people there were some who became fascinated with China and became interested in it. My wife was of extraordinary help. She helped to organize the Embassy wives - particularly the wives of members of the Country Team. However, as you know, the modern Foreign Service wife does not necessarily feel any obligation whatever to support her husband's career or do things that she may not want to do. So there were quite a few holdouts against doing anything on behalf of the Embassy, even assisting their husband's representational duties. However, many spouses, of course along with the help of a lot of, what you might call, old-fashioned and helpful people, managed to get activities going, including study groups, tours, picnics, huge Fourth of July parties, and this kind of thing. This was specific assistance for the American community and for our relationships with Chinese. We also had a Community Liaison Officer in the Embassy in Beijing, too.

Q: How did that work?

HUMMEL: Very well. We didn't have any of these blowups of indignation against the Embassy. Some people would develop a general antipathy toward the Chinese and all things Chinese, but they were a very small minority. As I said, we had a high percentage of Chinese language officers, who were involved and wanted to be in China. So they regarded this assignment as a kind of adventure and the opening of a new career. We were opening Consulates all around the country, so there were jobs available-and good jobs-for people who wanted to be involved. In Beijing we didn't have the kind of tension that we had in Pakistan, for example.

Q: This is a kind of structural question, but you had morale problems. You were under strict instructions within the Foreign Service that the "spouse"-usually the wife, of an officer who does not want to participate, help out, and all of that-doesn't have to do anything. Some wives take this literally. Did you find yourself saying, "Well, So-and-So's wife won't do this, so I'll give this job to a different person." I have done this myself. At a certain point people who maintain their rights find that opportunities are not given to them because it's too much trouble. So they have their rights, but they're not getting many opportunities. Did you find this to be the case?

HUMMEL: Do you mean that there were some kinds of mild sanctions against these people?

Q: Not really "sanctions." It was a matter of just not offering more challenging jobs, which meant that more interesting assignments were not offered to the husband, because you knew that the wife would not go along with it.

HUMMEL: No, I don't recall a case like that. I think that we handled these things in a separate way. There was one gimmick that I used. This might be instructive for some other people, some day. We had one excellent Foreign Service Officer who was neglecting his wife and eight year old son and was sleeping with a very nice young professional woman who worked for the CIA Station. The wife got terribly upset, naturally. She came to me and wanted me to tell her husband that he had to mend his ways. I discussed this matter with a couple of members of the Embassy staff. They all agreed that I didn't have the power to tell him anything about his personal life, if it did not affect his job performance.

Now, that's not the case with CIA employees. I called in the CIA Chief of Station and said, "Look, here is a problem involving the wife of one of our officers. Her husband is sleeping with one of your women. I don't know what the Embassy officer's wife is going to do. I can't say that she will commit suicide, because I don't think that she will. However, who knows? It's terribly hard on the child. Why don't you tell your woman that you have unique powers over all of your agents?" She was a substantive employee of the Station- actually a Case Officer. I said, "You can tell her to stop this liaison. I can't do it." He said, "Oh, sure. I'll take care of it." He had already heard about this situation. So we terminated that liaison, and the matter quieted down. The Foreign Service Officer went back and was living in the apartment with his wife again. Later on, they were divorced, and he married this CIA woman subsequently. They're still married, have a nice family, and so forth. There was a kind of happy ending. Anyway, CIA can do things in handling personnel problems which the State Department can't do.

Q: China is a country in the Exotic Orient. Was there a problem with either male or female staff getting involved with a Chinese national more than would have happened elsewhere?

HUMMEL: No, not very much. Things like that sometimes happen now. However, in those very early stages of our relationship with the PRC, when it was just developing, Chinese men and women who might have become involved with Americans would have been severely penalized if they were caught having sexual relations with foreigners. It was the PRC Government attitude which prevented it.

Q: Certainly to the great satisfaction of the American Ambassador!

HUMMEL: We had quite a few cases of this among the non-official American community. That's another aspect. The non-official community was burgeoning-teachers, students, resident business people, and lawyers. All kinds of Americans were moving in, in great numbers. We had some nasty cases there where the Chinese authorities would pretend that they had information in their possession-so-called Chinese classified, internal documents. A lot of people, including journalists, had access to such documents. Anyway, they would use these excuses to expel someone-or even put them in jail. Two American women got involved in this way.

Q: What happened to them?

HUMMEL: They were eventually allowed to leave the country. They were not really mistreated in any way.

Q: What were the Chinese after in such cases?

HUMMEL: They were trying to separate the two societies. First of all, they had a paranoid attitude about security and national secrets, including economic statistics. Secondly, there was a genuine desire to prevent contamination of Chinese society with American social habits.

Q: Just about this time I was the first and last Department of State Liaison Officer with the U. S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. That was an abortive attempt to bring the two services together. I remember seeing piles of telegrams every morning concerning Chinese exchange students. They had to go through a process. The Chinese were "flooding" the United States. Could we talk a bit about the exchange programs? What were the Chinese getting out of it, and what were the problems they had with it? Then we can move to the other aspect.

HUMMEL: When Deng Xiaoping himself visited the U. S. in 1979 after the change in recognition, it was explained to him-and he finally grasped the idea-that we had legislation called the Jackson-Vanik Amendment. This was designed to promote, persuade, or force the Soviet Government to allow Jews to emigrate from the Soviet Union. Of course, it didn't do what it was supposed to do. It was a failure. However, in that amendment there was a provision that, to have most favored nation tariff treatment, which we give to virtually everybody, a country with a communist or non-market economy would have to demonstrate that it had free emigration. This was explained to Deng. He is supposed to have said, "Oh, that's easy! How many do you want? Ten million, fifteen million?" [Laughter] In any case, the procedures for getting a Chinese passport became very easy. In fact, it was harder to get an American visa than it was to get a Chinese passport.

Q: I'm sure of it.

HUMMEL: As you know, there is the requirement of showing [an American consular officer] that you will return to your country at the end of the proposed stay in the United States. It's very hard to show that you are going to go back to a place where your salary would be 1/100 of what a person could earn in the United States.

Anyway, there was a flood of Chinese students to many countries, but mostly to the United States. At first a very large portion of these Chinese students would return to the PRC. There are, of course, several categories of visas, some of which are very tight and very hard to get out of.

Q: Those are "exchange" visas.

HUMMEL: Those people still go back. However, a large number just disappear. After the Tiananmen incident...

Q: When did this occur?

HUMMEL: It was in June, 1989. After that the Bush administration-I suppose that it was the right thing to do, but it caused a lot of problems-gave all Chinese students a moratorium and told them that they didn't have to go back to Mainland China if they didn't want to go. Many of them, in fact, are economic instead of political refugees. But you know all about that controversy.

So there was a very substantial flow of Chinese out of the PRC and American students into the PRC, quite often for the purpose of teaching English. They were welcome everywhere and were scattered all over China. Quite often they were studying Chinese on the side. Some of them were going to special language schools around the country. But the American presence was everywhere in China.

The business of the Embassy, I should say-and I concentrated on the high profile negotiations, of course-was across the board. I was busy most of the time-not so much negotiating the arms sales agreement-helping to manage the representations that we would have to make to the PRC authorities about trade, visa, and space problems, when we wanted more apartments. I covered the whole range of Embassy activity and was involved with all of the sections of the Embassy.

Another thing that happened that turned out to be unexpectedly beneficial was the formation of the Foreign Commercial Service and the assignment from the Commerce Department of Commercial Officers. When this subject was first raised, I was dead against it. I think that most Foreign Service Officers were. We felt that our Economic Sections could and should be able to be staffed up to do this kind of thing. As it turned out, we got absolutely first class people into the Foreign Commercial Service. There is, I think, now a good demarcation between economic reporting and negotiations, on the one hand, and assisting American firms, through the Commerce Department, to take advantage of bidding opportunities, to give them advice when they come to the country for the first time, and so on-all the kinds of things that the Foreign Commercial Service does.

This process of establishing the Foreign Commercial Service began when I was in Pakistan. We had a substandard Commercial Officer who wasn't even stationed in the capital, Islamabad. He was down in Karachi. However, that situation straightened itself out when a better officer was assigned. My impression now is that the whole thing really works quite well. The Commerce Department has its own Foreign Service. It is not as tightly organized or trained as the FSO Corps is, but I'm satisfied that, given all the limitations in the Commerce Department and all the limitations of American businessmen and businesses that are not active enough in going overseas to promote exports, it's working pretty well.

Q: While we're on this subject, could we talk a bit about whether you were seeing the impact of the Chinese, trained in the United States in a completely different framework, who came back to China? Did they bring back ideas of freedom, competition, and so forth?

HUMMEL: Not really, no. Not in terms of ideological change. However, there were many tragedies involving people who were extremely well trained, especially in the sciences. They came back into antediluvian scientific circumstances and substandard equipment, so that their training couldn't be utilized. That was a terrible disappointment to many Chinese.

Q: I found this was true when I was in Yugoslavia. [Visiting Americans] also ran across the occasional "Herr Professor" who had been trained before World War II in Austria and who encountered some "upstart" who had been trained in the United States and was years ahead of him in terms of where the world was today.

HUMMEL: That's quite true. There was jealousy and an unwillingness to recognize the changes that had taken place, particularly in the eyes of people who had never been overseas and who were unwilling to recognize that they had had inferior training, compared to these younger people, these upstarts.

Q: The PRC authorities were weeding out their "good, political types," but were not very good "technocrats."

HUMMEL: That's right. This process has continued to the present day. You can't say that the process is finished, but there aren't very many factory managers or heads of organizations in the government-even in local government-who are antediluvian Party stupes the way they used to be. Technologically, in terms of the technology that people study in Chinese universities and when they go abroad-these new, qualified people have now risen to the top. The chairman of the Communist Party of China and the Prime Minister are technologically educated people, as well as most of the people below.

Q: The positive side of this, almost racial, prejudice is that the Chinese are very good at technology. They are very good in business. Is this "mind set," from the American point of view, justified to some extent?

HUMMEL: Yes, I would say so. Absolutely. Of course, I would defend the other kind of Chinese, too, the ones who are artists, writers, or musicians. There are some famous Chinese musicians from Mainland China here in the US today. There is not just a scientific bent-science, mathematics, and physics-but also a very strong tradition of excellence in other fields. The problem is that these Chinese don't get very good jobs. The field of opportunity for them is not as broad as in government or politics.

Q: Let's talk about the American businessmen. China has traditionally been thought of in terms of "Oil for the Lamps of China." American businessmen have long felt that they are really going to "open up" China. What is it, one billion customers? The traditional view has been that China is a wonderful trade opportunity. This has always been a theme in American foreign affairs. You were in the PRC at a time when relations were really settling down. What about business opportunities and your experience with American businessmen? What was your involvement with them?

HUMMEL: A lot of these businessmen would come in to see me. I would, of course, have the appropriate Embassy officers with me, most of the time. I think that the unrealistic expectations had damped down by the time I arrived in Beijing. Right after the visit by President Nixon in 1972, there was a huge flood of euphoria. It was absolutely unrealistic, both on the Chinese and on the American side. The Chinese became disillusioned that we weren't pouring lots of aid money in there, lending capital at low interest rates. So there was a kind of dip in the value which the Chinese attached to the American relationship.

At the same time Henry Kissinger was using our position as the focus of a kind of triangle. We were able to deal both with the Soviet Union and with the PRC. The Chinese and the Soviets were really quite hostile toward each other. The Chinese resented it very much when we were able to make progress toward detente with the Soviet Union. In fact, in a public speech which some Chinese figure made, he accused the Americans of "standing on China's shoulders" to reach a better relationship with the Soviet Union. This wasn't too far from the truth.

The initial impetus for the U. S. and the PRC to get together, and the Nixon visit, was to confront the Soviet Union jointly to forestall Soviet expansionism. On the PRC side it was genuine fear, as I think I said before, of the Brezhnev Doctrine and the fact that the Soviets were massing troops on China's northern border. There was a division-size war up there on the border in 1969. So we had a common interest, an anti-Soviet interest. However, the Chinese thought that Kissinger was cheating by getting a little more for the U. S. in terms of detente than the Chinese were able to get. So that caused a dip in Sino-American relations. That happened in about 1975.

At the time that full diplomatic relations were established, there was another wave of euphoria in our bilateral relations. We signed very quickly some 20 agreements of all kinds: trade, scientific relations, technology, exchange of persons, a Fulbright agreement, and various others. There was also an agreement on textile quotas and so on. We introduced the Chinese to quotas at an early stage. That set off another wave of euphoria on the part of the Chinese. However, once again, the capital never materialized to the extent that the Chinese expected. On our side we were seeing the unlovely, unpleasant aspects of Chinese society in the draconian hand of the Communist Party of China and the fact that laws didn't mean very much. If a very high party official wanted something done, it was done-whether it was a good or bad thing or whether it would hurt American businessmen.

At the earlier stage, when I was in Beijing in 1981, the Chinese Residential Block Committees exercised very close control over the personal lives of everyone living in their area, including what they did outside the immediate area. If they went to bars and got drunk, they would be punished when they returned. All of this began to break down when I was in Beijing, during the period from 1981 to 1985. The level of personal and social freedom improved substantially. Not, of course, political freedom. That is still frozen in an antediluvian, Marxist mode.

I am fond of reminding my Chinese friends of this when I go back to China now. We have furious arguments. I am very frank with them. I know that I have a particular kind of acceptance because they know I am their friend.

But these up's and down's, these states of euphoria and then disappointment have been going on for quite a long time.

Q: We go back to, what is it, 1981, when we sent Shaw out to China? Did you get very much involved with trying to assist American businessmen? I imagine that this could be an unending task.

HUMMEL: Yes. Of course, we had problems. When Boeing Aircraft and McDonnell-Douglas were competing trying to sell aircraft to China, I had to be very careful. I couldn't promote one over the other. However, one of the most active parts I played, and in quite an unusual way, was in the civil air negotiations to get Northwest Airlines its promised license to fly to China. Normally, a team is sent out from Washington to handle civil air negotiations. Those negotiations were bogging down, and we were really going to terminate some of the Chinese flights to the United States because of their failure to do what they had promised to do.

I stepped into those negotiations myself and spent two days being the civil air negotiator, along with the US team from Washington. The Chinese finally signed an agreement just at the time that the aircraft should have taken off from the airport which the American negotiating team was leaving on. This was a typical, hold out, Chinese negotiating ploy. I would like to think that I had a material effect on the success of that issue.

Mostly, though, negotiations like this are handled by visiting American negotiating teams made up of experts. I could not become an expert on such matters on short notice.

Q: What about the American news media in China during the time that you were there? Was it a problem trying to keep them out of trouble and all that?

HUMMEL: No, I had very little trouble. The New York Times correspondent was reprimanded and eventually forced to leave the PRC, because he clearly violated the travel restrictions by going into an area which was closed to him. He knew that it was closed. I got involved in this and had messages from the editor of the New York Times and its editorial staff. However, these things were very much the exception, rather than the rule. They seldom happened. Mostly, we had very smooth relationships with the American press. I encouraged the Embassy officers to talk as freely as they could with the correspondents and to brief them. I did some of this myself. I had a monthly meeting with all of the American newspaper representatives. They wanted to know what the Embassy was doing and what we thought.

I think that we had excellent relations with the press people. I don't recall any real arguments, though I remember a discussion with one upstart. I can't remember where he was from—a Chicago paper, I think. He tried the old tactic of threatening me by saying, "Look, if you don't tell me what..." I can't even remember the substance of his remark. He said, "Look, I'm favorably disposed to writing good things about the American Embassy and Foreign Service and so on. But if you don't give me some information about this situation that I'm asking you about, I'm going to have to change my mind." I just looked at him, laughed, and said, "It's kind of ludicrous for you to be saying, 'Stop me before I kill again.'" I just laughed him out of the office. That's the only time that I can think of that there was any problem. Most of the correspondents were cooperative enough.

Q: So there was a pretty professional American press corps there.

HUMMEL: Yes. This leads to something else-the fact that we were quite sure that our houses and offices were bugged by the Chinese. This meant that a certain number of subjects-and you'd be surprised at how few they were-would have to be discussed in a special room. This was the so-called bubble, classified conference room. This room was not supposed to be buggable. These subjects included future negotiating positions, anything relating to the CIA, and that kind of thing. However, there was no harm in letting the Chinese monitors know what our basic attitudes were, about Chinese actions, about our routine operations, and most of our problems and work.

Another matter concerned our efforts with the American community liaison. I had a monthly meeting with all of the adults in the Embassy community, including wives. That was very well received. These sessions would last for an hour and a half or two hours. Each Section Chief would review what was going on, including what was happening and what might happen later on. Everyone was invited to speak. Then I would do an overview of the general political trends and so forth. This was a mechanism for keeping people's interests substantively involved in the Embassy. I was very proud of doing that.

Q: Did the "Voice of America" give you any problems?

HUMMEL: Yes, not because of any fault on the part of the "Voice," but there were official Chinese complaints.

Q: That was what I was referring to. How did you handle those?

HUMMEL: Very straightforwardly. I would say that the VOA is a news organization. The Chinese complaints almost invariably involved a news item. Having been the Deputy Director of the Voice of America, I knew how this thing worked. Commentary is another thing. That quite often has policy implications in it. However, the news is prepared by a separate news desk which is going to carry news. If it can find two, credible news sources for a given item, they're going to put it on the air. They're not going to suppress something that they think has happened in China. I would just explain this and say, "I'm sorry, but we've been through this many times before. I'm surprised that you don't know the situation in the 'Voice of America' newsroom. Now, if you have complaints about other things, I will express your concern in Washington."

Q: Did you feel at times that the complaints you got were "pro forma" so that somebody at a certain level could say, "Oh, I've vigorously protested to the American Ambassador."

HUMMEL: Precisely.

Q: What about things akin to earthquakes, tidal waves, other disasters, or Presidential visits. Did you have any?

HUMMEL: Yes, we had a visit from President Reagan, and that was a tidal wave. As I said, we had George Bush in Beijing twice.

Q: Did former President Richard Nixon visit-as part of his public rehabilitation?

HUMMEL: Yes.

Q: Well, let's talk about the Nixon visit first, and then move on to the Reagan visit. As you recall, Nixon had to resign from the Presidency because of the Watergate Affair. If I recall-maybe I'm wrong-his visit back to China, where he was well received, was a part of his [political] rehabilitation...

HUMMEL: I'm pretty sure that there were two Nixon visits during my time in Beijing. Henry Kissinger came, perhaps three times.

Q: How were they received?

HUMMEL: Very well. These visits did not impinge on Embassy activities. None of them-Mondale, Brown, and others-really wanted to be involved with the American Embassy. They were guests of the Chinese. None of them wanted people from the Embassy listening to and reporting to Washington on their private conversations, as private citizens. But they were very good to the Embassy. Both Nixon and Kissinger-and Mondale-were very good at finding ways to let me know what had gone on. More than once-I think it was twice-I was out at the Beijing airport to see Nixon off. And I was usually out at the airport when Kissinger was leaving. I can't remember who took the initiative-maybe I did, maybe he did. I went out there-and we would go out on the tarmac so that we couldn't be bugged. He would tell me what he had found out and what he thought the atmosphere was. They were very good about that. But I was never invited into his meetings, nor would I expect to be.

That used to bother me-and still bothers many Ambassadors. High ranking figures will come, and the Ambassador is not involved in the meeting. I guess I got to anticipate Henry Kissinger's point of view-and also Nixon's. They wanted to have a private conversation and have the basis for privacy in their personal relationships. I thought it was good of them to let me find out what had been discussed, and get an impression of what had gone on.

Q: Can you tell me your impression of President Ronald Reagan's visit to China? He'd been a "darling" of the right wing, damning "Red China" up and down for years. Suddenly to appear in Beijing...

HUMMEL: Well, I think that you have to look at this-at least I looked at it-as a necessary component of a normal relationship with China. We had visits from the President and Prime Minister of China, who came to the United States. In each case I would come back to the United States and accompany them around the country. It came time for the Americans to have a state visit to China, so Reagan went to China. It is in this context, instead of as a deliberate single act that you have to look at this.

However, this kind of thing is more important than many people realize-at least it seems to me. What state visits like these do is to give an unmistakable signal to the bureaucrats on both sides that the relationship is stable. This is very valuable. It means that routine business between the two countries is conducted more smoothly. It is a signal that it is better to be nice to the other side. Regarding our very cumbersome export controls on technological exports to China, for example, DOD always dragged its feet hard on these things. Well, you could sense a little loosening up every time we'd have a high level exhibition of the value of this relationship. The same effect was perceptible on the Chinese side. Visits like these are a hell of a burden on the staff of the Embassy, temporarily, but it's "doable," and the effects are noticeable in the relationship. In fact, it's almost essential in some respects.

Q: How did Reagan respond [to the visit]? What was your impression?

HUMMEL: He is a trooper, in the sense that, when he's briefed, he remembers his brief and does what he's supposed to do. I don't think that there's a great deal of gray matter there. He was more hard of hearing than I had realized. I frequently had to raise my voice in briefing him. I had breakfast with him and his top people each of his three mornings in Beijing. We would discuss what was likely to happen and who was who. He didn't absorb background very much, like the personal background of Deng Xiaoping or whoever. However, he did know what he was about and he did it. Down in Shanghai he put on a performance which nobody could have bettered. At a Chinese university he answered questions from the audience. Most of the questions were agreed on in advance. He was absolutely superb. This was his showman or trooper side. He did extremely well, including the meetings with high level officials. He knew what he wanted to say, he didn't deviate or give away things, and he was not sloppy in his presentation. You had to give it to him that he could do these things.

But it required preparation. Mike Deaver was head of the advance planning party. He got into a lot of trouble later on. He became a consultant in Washington.

Q: Oh, yes, Michael Deaver.

HUMMEL: He was the advance man. The advance party was more trouble than the visit itself.

Q: Often this is the case.

HUMMEL: But once again the Embassy, aside from the logistical strains, did not have to be on the "front line," fighting the battles of security and scheduling with the Chinese. It was the advance party that did that. Therefore, whatever damage or hurt feelings resulted were a consequence of things like turning off all of the traffic for two hours on the main avenue of Beijing, while Ronald Reagan's cavalcade went back and forth. It happened once-literally, there was no traffic whatever. The Chinese didn't want to do this. They also didn't want him to use his own automobile. Deaver had to convince them of the need. None of these sometimes abrasive negotiations were handled by Embassy officers as the American principals.

Q: What was your impression of the Chinese ruling apparatus? Deng Xiaoping was the top man then. How did you evaluate how the Chinese leadership operated at this time?

HUMMEL: They had some quite good people. Deng Hsiao-ping was already somewhat in the background. He didn't have a front line position. He was not the head of the Communist Party of China and he was not the head of the government. However, he was the head of the Military Commission of the Party, which was still a very powerful position. There was no doubt that he could make things happen. Whatever he wanted to have happen would happen-in those days. Now, of course, he is more or less entirely out of it and is fading away.

The Prime Minister, Zhao Ziyang, was a really first class administrator and a nice person. I got to know him quite well. I got to know Deng Xiaoping quite well, too, because of all the times I would go in to see him with American visitors, but sometimes on my own.

The top level Chinese leaders never really grasped the complexities and difficulties of the American political system. We have an Executive Branch that can make promises and a Congress that can then refuse to carry them out. The top Chinese leaders never understood that. But the working levels understood this-the people in the ministries. The Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Vice Ministers in charge of our area understood this very well. They had good professional people.

All during this period, from 1981 to 1985, the Chinese economy was booming and the farmers were making fabulous amounts of money for the first time. This freed up agriculture. The government was beginning to allow private enterprise and small collectives. Everybody's standard of living was going up. There were no appreciable political frictions. The American side was not hammering away on human rights, the way we did later, after the Tiananmen incident.

After we solved the problem of Taiwan arms sales, there was a year's period, nevertheless, when we continued to have abrasions and difficulties. I would be called in, roundly criticized, and urged to change American policy on all kinds of issues. But these were all manageable. They did not always go up to the highest level of government, as they previously had.

For example, about the time that we finished our negotiations on the communique on Taiwan arms sales, in August, 1982, Deng Hsiao-ping called me in-just the two of us, although I had a note taker with me. I think I took my DCM on this occasion.

Q: Who was your DCM?

HUMMEL: Charles Freeman. A first class man. I've been blessed with extraordinarily good DCM's.

Deng asked that we return to China a young lady tennis player, named Hu Na, who had been allegedly induced or lured by the Taiwan people to defect, when she was on a trip to the United States. Now there's some family connection there which we never figured out. Anyway, they wanted her back. So Deng Hsiao-ping asked me personally to arrange for her to return to China. He said that she had been lured away by evil people, which I believe was a fact. This kind of thing normally should not have been dealt with at that high level. I had to tell him frankly that I would, of course, report what he said. I would see what could be done but I had to say that, personally, I did not think that it was possible that we would force her to do anything that she didn't want to do. That was something which was impossible to do in our system. However, I would see what I could do.

It turned out, of course, that she never went back. Moreover, I really resented the way in which the State Department handled that. They gave her political asylum, even though Deng had specifically promised that she would not be persecuted in any way. We gave her political asylum, which said, in effect, that she would be persecuted if she returned. Now that was a gratuitous thing to do. We could have arranged for her to stay here, without that insult to Deng. I really resented the way that was handled in the State Department.

I got back at the Chinese a little bit. Repeatedly, whenever the subject of Hu Na would come up, I would say, "I am very sorry that such bad advice was given to Deng Hsiao-ping to raise this matter at that level, when our system did not permit us to force her." That would always shut everybody up, because saying that you gave bad advice to your leader...

Q: I've been in this situation in South Korea, where people came to me from the office of the Prime Minister or the President, saying, "Please issue a visa to so and so." This is an awful situation, because you know that you're up against a problem of "face." At the same time, you have to obey your own regulations. You shouldn't be put in this position.

HUMMEL: No foreign national is likely to believe the actual fact that the Ambassador is prohibited by law from intervening in any visa case. Nobody could believe this. They think, "Oh, there must be some way." It's quite embarrassing, sometimes.

Q: How did your officers operate in China in getting information and all that?

HUMMEL: As I said, we had a very high percentage of Chinese language officers. And the atmospherics were such-and getting better all the time-that they could have access to all kinds of government officials and private Chinese. In those days we had ample travel money. The present shortage of travel money causes serious problems in the collection of information outside of the cities where we have Consulates. During my time in China as Ambassador our people would travel all over the country. Collecting information was easy, especially when you're outside of Beijing and traveling in towns, calling on county governors, local bank officials, and that kind of thing. People open up quite well, and it's very possible to do very good reporting. Which we did.

One thing I did resent was the annual reporting plan, which was far too complex. The Department has allowed the Washington agency consumers to put up a Christmas list of every conceivable thing they want to know about China. Then we would have to prepare an annual reporting plan for reports on electric power, agriculture, business climate, opportunities for investment or sales, political changes, rural taxes, family planning, and a long list of scheduled reports. And this left very little time left for voluntary reporting or voluntary think pieces. I used to do some think pieces myself. I resented the manipulation by Washington and the monopoly exercised by Washington on the kind of reporting we did. I know that the State Department and other consumers were happy with the end result of the reporting from China.

Q: I see that you have a list of subjects there. Are there other areas that we should cover?

HUMMEL: These are kind of "add-on's." I don't think that I mentioned that I was very proud of being made a Career Ambassador in the first batch, when the Department reinstituted the class of Career Ambassador. Roy Atherton, Walter Stoessel, and I were the first group, of only three. I can't remember the year-it was in the 1970's. There had previously been a class of Career Ambassadors, but then the rank carried some rather excessive privileges which the Congress objected to. Among other things you could stay in the Foreign Service forever, without retirement. Anyway, nowadays, there was no discernable extra privilege; it didn't even carry any raise in pay because we have a "cap" imposed by Congress, but it was a great honor. There are still only five Career Ambassadors allowed at any one time.

CIA. I hope that I'm not repeating myself, but I had quite good CIA Chiefs of Station. They were always charged by me with finding out what all the other intelligence types were doing and letting me know of things I would want to know. By that I mean finding out what was being done by the Defense Attaché ½ and the DEA and narcotics guys who, at times, were terrible cowboys-in Pakistan, for example. My CIA Chiefs of Station were excellent. I would find out about their secret orders from Washington and sometimes stop them, change them, appeal to Washington, or whatever. That's an important function of an Ambassador: controlling non-State elements of the Embassy which, I think, is not always appreciated.

Q: We're talking about our Foreign Affairs establishment. You have a whole series of [U. S. Government] agencies which kind of "do their own thing." Supposedly, the Ambassador is in charge, but unless you have somebody who can "ride herd" on them, you can't do it. This is a good use of your CIA Chief of Station, who is a good person to do this job, because they're right at the center of things.

HUMMEL: Also, the NSA have a completely insatiable desire to capture every damned thing that's possible to capture from air waves, telephones, and microwave relays.

Q: NSA is the National Security Agency, which collects [telecommunications] intelligence.

HUMMEL: Yes. They would say that they needed to have three people with their "black boxes," inserted into a six-man Consulate in China. I would just say, "Hell, no, you're not going to do it. Over my dead body, because it will instantly be obvious to the Chinese what these people are up to, and our whole access at that post will suffer." They might produce some reports that we or Washington might find useful, but I could never get them or CIA to show me precisely what interesting and important information they fed back to me out of all of this collecting. That was a common complaint, all over China. Sometimes, they do marvelous things, tracking shipments of nuclear weapons and so forth. But as far as political or economic information related to my interests are concerned, I didn't get anything useful, and CIA tells me that's the case, still.

That would not have been a problem if they knew how to restrict their requirements. But their requirements are tremendous.

Defense Attaché's. I was often disappointed in the quality of the Military Attaché's. The Defense Intelligence Organization, DIA, was invented by Robert McNamara, Secretary of Defense in the early 1960's. The purpose was to strip down the separate intelligence organizations of the various military services and centralize them, so that there would be less duplication. You see duplication like this now, today. The purpose was not achieved because the separate services did not really downsize their own Navy, Army, and Air Force intelligence systems.

Q: So that you had duplication.

HUMMEL: Furthermore, because they had to staff their own intelligence organizations, the services didn't send their best people to DIA. The DIA is responsible for sending Defense Attaché's abroad. This two step process resulted in not sending the best intelligence people to the field.

Q: There is also the problem that intelligence is not "the way to the top" in the military services. The intelligence function has some very good people, but it's still not a desirable assignment, unless somebody has a predilection for that.

HUMMEL: They do have some very good people. I don't mean to denigrate all of them. As I said, I had to fire one Defense Attaché because he simply wasn't doing his job. There were a lot of other hangers on who loved to go on trips and jump out of airplanes with the local armed forces, but never delivered a thing in terms of reporting.

I'm about at the end of my list. One thing about retirement. I felt during all of my foreign assignments that I was terribly lucky to be in charge of a mission. I was in charge of five missions, if you count the long period that I was Chargé d'Affaires in Taiwan. It quickly became obvious to me that I had a kind of obligation to be an anchor for the whole American community. I know that I didn't abuse my position. I think that I had a pretty good reputation in that respect. And yet the morale of the troops, including the non-official American community, was something that I had an obligation to be concerned about. You can't interfere very much, and I don't think that I did. I tried to be a leader of the American community.

Now, I had known for a considerable time that I was going to retire, because I had passed the age of 65. I was coming to the end of my assignment as Ambassador to China. I actually stayed on an extra four months or something like that beyond age 65. If you don't have a Presidential assignment, you have to retire. I had no desire to compete for another Presidential assignment. I had already had five of them.

Q: You were saying that you had no desire to have another one. You'd already had five Presidential appointments.

HUMMEL: So my wife and I felt that we had figured things out pretty well. We wanted to come back to our house in Chevy Chase which we'd bought in 1960. We had our lives more or less organized.

There were two things that I didn't anticipate. One of them, sort of trivial, was the awful effect of not having a secretary. I was terribly stupid about this. I didn't buy a word processor for too long a time.

Q: Also, word processors were just coming in when you retired. Now, if you don't know how to use a word processor, it's like not being able to drive a car.

HUMMEL: More substantively and more interestingly, I discovered, somewhat to my surprise, that I felt a kind of freedom which I had not expected to feel. That is, I no longer had to look at the newspapers every day, as I had had to do even when I was on home leave or away from post. I no longer had an obligation to know what was going on in China, Pakistan, or wherever. I no longer had the feeling that I was responsible for the well being of a staff, including, to some extent, the non-official American community. We had this horrible disaster, the burning of the Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan. I hadn't realized that this feeling of responsibility was a burden, and at the time I don't think that it was. It just came with the job. It was something that I accepted. So after leaving I had the feeling that I no longer had to do that. I had not anticipated this, and it's a little hard to explain. It's a little esoteric and maybe trivial, but it's part of being an Ambassador, and part of no longer being an Ambassador.

Q: You had this depth of knowledge about China. We are sticking to American foreign relations in this interview. [After retirement] was your knowledge "tapped" by the foreign affairs apparatus?

HUMMEL: Not particularly, and that's natural. I take steps to maintain my knowledge. I still have my security clearance. I maintain a relationship, mostly with the East Asia Bureau, but also with the Near Eastern Bureau. I was called upon for a short time to try to negotiate the departure from the Embassy in Beijing of a Chinese national who fled to our Embassy for asylum after the Tiananmen incident.

Q: That was in 1989.

HUMMEL: Somebody had the bright idea that they could get me to negotiate it. It was not so bright, actually, because this should have been negotiated in Beijing by the Embassy, instead of bringing in an outsider. But I agreed to try. The negotiation fell through-and I think very properly so.

When I decided to accept an invitation from the North Koreans to go to North Korea five years ago, when very few people were going, I first checked that out with the East Asia Bureau. I received briefings from them and then came back and reported to them. When I have attended international conferences, some in the United States, some of them in Tokyo, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Beijing, and so forth, I would come back and give my impressions to the East Asia Bureau. But this was mostly done at my initiative.

There is really no good way to use people like me very much. Having been an Assistant Secretary, I know that it's almost impossible to have people who are only partly engaged in an issue. Either you have to be totally immersed and knowledgeable about everything, including the highest classification of intelligence, or else your information and advice is inadequate.

There is one thing that the EA Bureau was interested in. That is, my impression of the mood, especially in Beijing, when I went there. I have some good Chinese friends that I see. I've been going back to Beijing three or four times a year, ever since retirement. I cannot say that I foresaw the Tiananmen debacle but I did come back to Washington just before the Tiananmen affair, following a visit there. But I told everybody that I was appalled at the way the issues of corruption and inflation were making everybody angry at the government. To me, these were the two issues that really led to the Tiananmen incident. This is not to say that there was not a clamor among intellectuals for democracy.

Q: Also, the Tiananmen affair in 1989 was terribly handled. There was prolonged inaction. They had to do something.

HUMMEL: The PRC Government totally mishandled the affair. They couldn't decide whether to use very modest force at the beginning to get two thousand students out of the Square. Very modest force would have done it. Or they could have conciliated and negotiated. They did neither.

Q: Well, because you are able to report [to the State Department] on the "mood" in Beijing, I would suggest that they are going through a very interesting time in China. As far as internal politics are concerned, no one knows where China is going. China is getting ready to be a really tremendous economic power, if it's not that already. However, the political situation is still pretty close to being antediluvian Marxist. In this respect China seems to be getting weaker. How do you feel about it today and what have you been passing on to people who ask where China is going?

HUMMEL: It's hard to be sure, but my bottom line and that of many of my associates and friends here, who all keep up very closely with events in China, is, first of all, that the place is not going to fall apart. It's not going to dissolve into fiefdoms or warlordism. There is a nationalism there which has become strong. The Chinese military will certainly not permit it. They are the most solid institution in the whole country.

Secondly, I'm pretty sure that they're going to be able to solve or at least ameliorate their economic problems. China is terribly overpopulated, and this is Mao Zedong's fault for not allowing any kind of family planning until the 1960's, after the population had doubled. There are dangers in their basic, infrastructure which are going to plague them for a long time. Yet the rate of economic growth seems to be staying remarkably high. I think that they are probably going to make it.

On the political side it seems to me that we're inevitably going to see a slow loosening up of some of the political structures. Many Chinese dislike their own government. You run into them all over China, and they speak remarkably freely, more freely now than ever before in the PRC. There is no political reign of terror there. They say these things in conversation, not in writing or for reproduction. Everyone, even the people who most dislike their government, are very much afraid of chaos. They don't want to see any instant shift to multi-party democracy, which would be chaotic. The economy has a bit of chaos built into it, but they are doing pretty well on figuring out ways to bring back to the Center the controls that they gave away and which allow so much chaos and corruption. On the whole, I'm reasonably optimistic.

Q: One last thing. What was your impression of the situation in North Korea when you went there? Was it in 1990 or something like that?

HUMMEL: It was about in 1989. It was an absolutely amazing place, hermetically sealed, and living on complete fictions that they can be self-reliant. My fear, and this is virtually a prediction, is that some day a sufficient number of people there will realize that they have been going absolutely in the wrong direction and that they do not actually have the paradise that Kim Il Sung and his son claim that they have. It is going to burst in on them that they are a horrible failure. They are an international, economic pariah because they owe everybody and are in default to virtually every country that they ever dealt with. Nobody will deal with them except on a cash basis.

They are capable of the most insane, barbaric atrocities, as we all know—blowing up airplanes, killing half of the South Korean cabinet with a bomb in Rangoon, and so forth. There is a "nomenclature," a corps of senior officials there, we believe, although we don't know very much about it, of about 30,000 people. These people have been abroad and know something about the outside world, and must realize the realities of their shams. They are treated entirely separately. They live in special compounds where they are sealed off from their own people. There are some military people involved in this group, too—people who really know what's going on outside.

I suspect that there's going to be a kind of implosion when things get very bad economically. You could have different factions at war. To me it means that some faction—it may very well involve more than one faction—will ask for military assistance from South Korea. We will not be able to prevent South Korea from helping them. The Chinese are not going to let their friends be overrun or slaughtered or whatever, and are not going to want to see the disappearance of the North Korean regime. The ingredients are there for a terribly messy kind of war. I'm afraid that may happen eventually. On the nuclear problem I don't know how to deal with that.

There are very effective ways the North Korean regime keeps the country isolated. They issue radios that can only receive one station. Their TV system is incompatible with the TV systems in South Korea and China and in Russia. So they really can keep the population in ignorance.

Q: One last question. As you look back on your long and distinguished career, what gives you the greatest satisfaction?

HUMMEL: I hate these questions because, on a computer, you could start on a "search" routine to examine my whole life . I can't do that, because everything is mixed. I think that my final assignment, in China, gave me the most satisfaction. After all, I was qualified for it by my knowledge of the language, education, and culture...

Q: Everything pointed there, and you got there.

HUMMEL: I got there, and I left with our relations in better shape than they were when I arrived. I'm still interested in China and I still go back there. In terms of personal satisfaction and personal pleasure, Burma, as I think I said, would be my top country, because the people are so very nice. And the hunting was excellent, too!

Q: All right. Well, why not stop at this point?

HUMMEL: My pleasure.

End of interview